



COMBAT

North America 1755–63

British Redcoat

VERSUS

French Fusilier

Stuart Reid



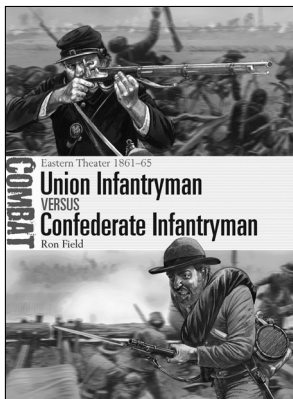
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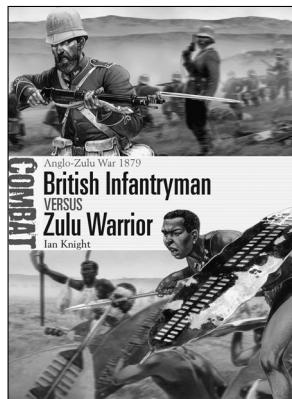
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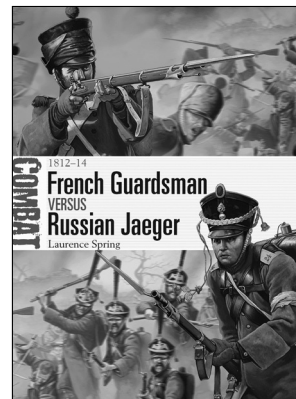
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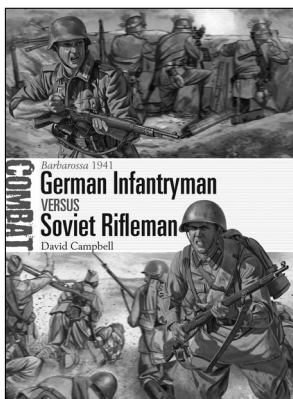
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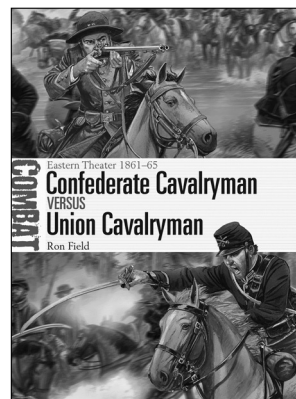
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COMBAT British Redcoat **VERSUS** French Fusilier

Stuart Reid



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The publishers regret that they can enter into no correspondence upon this matter.

Editor's note

Imperial measurements are used in this book. For ease of comparison please refer to the following conversion table:

1 mile = 1.6km

1yd = 0.9m

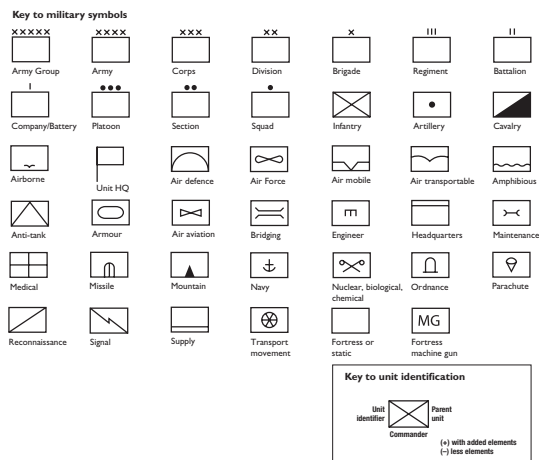
1ft = 0.3m

1in = 2.54cm/25.4mm

1lb = 0.45kg

Author's note

In this book the terms 'Indian', 'Indians' and 'Les Sauvages' appear in the text, with reference to the indigenous peoples of North America. The use of these terms is in no way intended to convey anything derogatory, but simply to maintain consistency with the language used in quoted extracts appearing in the book.



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Introduction

Recounting how the French deployed for action at Cap-Rouge on Canada's Saint Lawrence River on a damp day in September 1759, Lieutenant John Knox of the British 43rd Foot also took the opportunity rather partially to compare and contrast the rival forces:

Upon our coming to an anchor, they turned out their floats and ranged them in great order; their cavalry then dismounted, formed on the right of the infantry, and their whole detachment ran down the precipice with a ridiculous shout and manned their works. I have often reflected upon the absurdity of this practice in the French, who entertain a high opinion of their own discipline and knowledge in the art of war; there is nothing that can be more absurd than such noises in engaging an enemy; I think it expressive of the greatest diffidence, and must tend to defeat all regularity and good order among themselves, because their men are thereby confused and are rendered incapable of paying attention to their officers or their duty; it is a false courage. How different, how nobly awful and expressive of true valour is the custom of the British troops! They do not expend their ammunition at an immense distance; and, if they advance to engage or stand to receive the charge, they are steady, profoundly silent and attentive, reserving their fire until they have received that of their adversaries, over whom they have a tenfold advantage; there are cases where huzzaing may be necessary, but those are very rare; the practice is unmilitary in an army or body of regulars; and experience plainly shows us that the troops who, in perfect silence, engage an enemy, waiting for their first fire, will always preserve a superiority. (Knox 1914: 2.78–79)

At that mid-point of the 18th century, almost the entire eastern seaboard of what is now the United States of America was comprised of a patchwork of autonomous English colonies stretching from New Hampshire (and what would become Maine) in the north to Georgia in the south and westwards inland as far as the mighty Allegheny mountain chain. To the south of these



This detail from a hand-coloured engraving after Samuel Blodgett shows a contemporary view of the battle of Lake George, 8 September 1755. To a very considerable extent this fight foreshadowed the engagement at La Belle-Famille four years later. Led by Colonel William Johnson, a British column made up of provincial troops was marching on the French fort at Saint-Frédéric (later Crown Point) when it was intercepted by 222 French regulars plus 600 Canadian militia and 700 Abenaki and Caughnawaga Mohawk allies, led by an officer from Europe named Ludwig August von Dieskau. Forewarned of the French approach when a patrol was ambushed in the 'Bloody Morning Scout', Johnson's men dug in behind a hastily raised breastwork of logs and branches. Unfortunately for Dieskau, the Canadian officer commanding his allies had been killed in that earlier skirmish and none of them would fight; nor, as a result, would the Canadians. In a combination of desperation and disgust, Dieskau formed his regulars into an assault column only to be shot to pieces by Johnson's three cannon. Dieskau himself was badly wounded and captured and as a result replaced by the Marquis de Montcalm. (Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection)



A series of three studies by Jean-Antoine Watteau (1684–1721) of rather dishevelled-looking French infantry on the march, quite at odds with conventional depictions of soldiers standing on parade or mounting guard in a smart and soldier-like manner. Particularly noticeable are the large sack-like bags slung on their backs like bundles of laundry, the muskets all slung under the arm rather than on the shoulder, the blanket or cloak enveloping one and another using his sword as a walking-stick. While dating to a rather earlier period, these sketches still provide a vivid impression of France's forces in North America. (Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection)

English colonies was Spanish Florida, while to the north and on the other side of the mountains was New France, part of it occupying much of what is now eastern Canada, and the rest covering Louisiana and the Illinois country. Linking those thinly spread French colonies and lonely outposts were the Mississippi and Ohio rivers, which at once served as a vital corridor between the Great Lakes and the Gulf of Mexico, a springboard for exploration and trade further to the west – and at one and the same time a potential barrier to the westward expansion of the growing British colonies.

The key to it all turned out to be the future site of Pittsburgh. At the time it was not settled by Europeans and simply known as the Forks of the Ohio. However, it was by attempting to seize the Forks in 1754 that a young Virginian aristocrat named George Washington turned a remote border dispute into a shooting war. Ironically, Washington was not deliberately trying to provoke the French but rather attempting to strengthen Virginia's claim to the coal-rich area, over that of neighbouring Pennsylvania. At first therefore it was hoped in both London and Versailles to keep the business safely at arms' reach from Europe. Inevitably, nevertheless, the conflict escalated as first the British and then very soon afterwards the French quietly shipped substantial reinforcements of regular soldiers across the Atlantic. Prior to 1755 France had been extremely reluctant to commit any regiments to the defence of New France, simply because not only was there no operational requirement for major units, but doing so invited their total loss. Even so, the build-up of British regulars which began in 1755 demanded a strong response. In a naval operation off the Grand Banks in 1755 some of those French reinforcements were intercepted by the Royal Navy, and to that there was no answer but open war – a war which from the British perspective was not aimed merely at defeating the French, but ultimately seizing Canada in its entirety once and for all.

The French and Indian War, as the conflict became known, began and remained a North American conflict, and is not to be confused with the contemporaneous Seven Years' War in Europe. For Britain the war in Europe, although offering opportunities in the Indies, was always no more than a distraction from the real war in the Americas. At first it would go badly for



This highly dramatized 19th-century depiction of the massacre of personnel of Britain's 35th Foot and others at Fort William Henry in August 1757 serves as a powerful reminder of how the war was viewed in America. Popularly, the French and Indian War – as it became known by way of distinguishing it from the contemporary Seven Years' War in Europe – is best remembered as the savage frontier conflict conveyed by an anonymous comment on Colonel Henry Bouquet's expedition in 1763 that: 'Those who have experienced only the severities and dangers of a campaign in Europe can scarcely form an idea of what is to be done and endured in an American war. In an American campaign everything is terrible—the face of the country, the climate, the enemy. There is no refreshment for the healthy nor relief for the sick. A vast inhospitable desert surrounds the troops where victories are not decisive, but defeats are ruinous, and simple death is the least misfortune that can happen to a soldier' (Anon 1790: 28). Yet in reality the war was largely fought and won not by the Indians who carried out the massacre, or by New England rangers, but by regular soldiers such as those of the 35th Foot who unsuccessfully defended the fort and the French *troupes de terre* who besieged it. (Public Domain)

Britain, with a major defeat on the Monongahela River in 1755 and the loss of Fort William Henry in 1757, but during the following year Britain fought back and after a textbook siege of the European-style fortress of Louisbourg, only a disastrous repulse at Ticonderoga prevented a British offensive into Canada itself. Instead, that was to come in 1759.

Prior to the decision to escalate the conflict, the defence of both the British and the French colonies in North America and Canada had been confided to their respective militias and to a scatter of regular independent companies. The relatively populous British colonies were also able at need to raise and maintain quasi-regular provincial regiments on a temporary basis for specific operations such as the capture of Louisbourg. Ultimately, responsibility for the administration of the geographically larger but far less densely populated French colonies fell to the Ministère de la Marine, relying chiefly on the regular soldiers of the *compagnies franches de la marine* or independent companies. The remote and heavily wooded nature of the frontiers also encouraged both sides to employ Indian tribesmen and use them together with colonial 'ranging companies' or *coureurs de bois* ('woods runners') for scouting and raiding. All of them would serve in the coming conflict, but from 1755 the nature of warfare in North America and Canada was in large measure changed by the mutual decision to commit regular regiments of the line.

While the great Prussian general and military theorist Carl von Clausewitz once defined war as an extension of politics by other means, so both the British and French armies contending for control of Canada saw the struggle as an extension of European warfare by other means. For the most part they were to do surprisingly well. There were certainly failures and popular legend holds that Major-General Edward Braddock, the

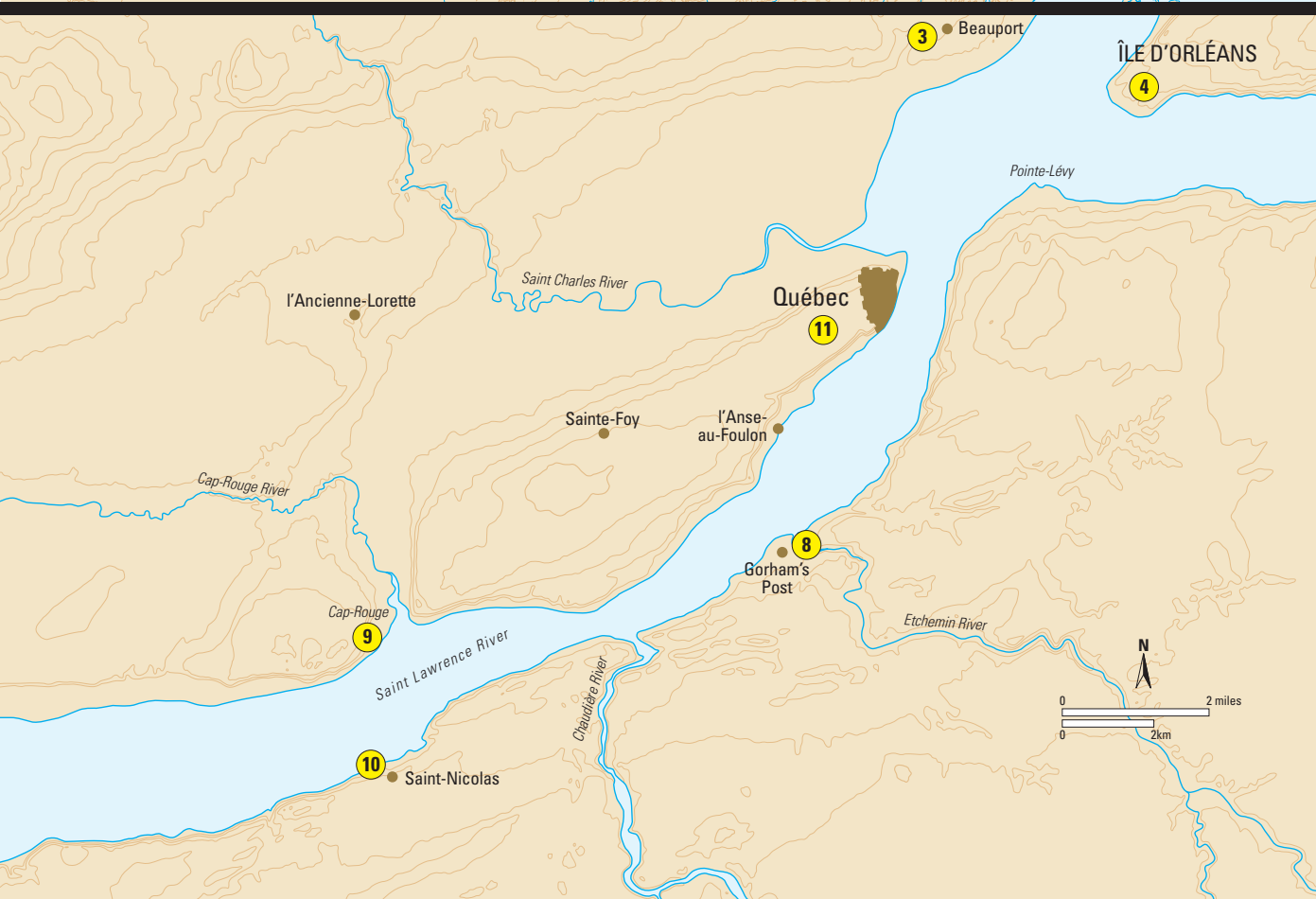
The struggle for Canada 1759 (opposite)

MAP KEY

- 1 16 May:** Lieutenant général the Marquis de Montcalm's field army sets out from Montréal, the French military base of operations throughout the defence of Canada, downriver to defend Québec from the British.
- 2 23 May:** Brigadier-General John Prideaux's expedition to the French outpost at Fort Niagara sets out from Schenectady, situated 18 miles north-west of Albany, the British base of operations.
- 3 29 May:** Montcalm's base camp is established at Beauport, considered the most likely route for a British assault on Québec itself. Consequently, the shoreline is heavily fortified all the way up to the Saint Charles River and an attempted British landing at the eastern end of the lines by Montmorency is badly defeated on 31 July.
- 4 28 June:** Having sailed 700 miles up the Saint Lawrence River, Major-General James Wolfe's expedition lands on the Île de Orléans, across the river from Québec, and maintains a base camp here during the siege.
- 5 6 July:** After moving up the Mohawk River to Fort Stanwix, then down to Fort Oswego and along Lake Ontario to Niagara, Prideaux's expedition arrives at Fort Niagara and commences a siege.
- 6 12 July:** Word reaches Capitaine Aubry and Capitaine de Lignery at Venango where they are preparing an expedition to go south to Fort Duquesne (not shown). Instead, they march north to relieve Fort Niagara, arriving on 24 July.
- 7 24 July:** The French forces seeking to relieve Fort Niagara clash with the British besiegers at the battle of La Belle-Famille; the fort surrenders on 25 July, the day after the French defeat at La Belle-Famille.
- 8 6 September:** The 43rd Foot embarks at the mouth of the Etchemin River preparatory to the British assault on Québec.
- 9 7 September:** Colonel Louis-Antoine de Bougainville's detachment is established at Cap-Rouge. Charged with shadowing increased British activity in the river above Québec, Bougainville is given all the regimental grenadier companies and picquets drawn from each regiment, as well as the available cavalry and some militia. However, he fails to respond when the British fleet drops down the river on the night of 12/13 September, and fails to intervene in the battle.
- 10 9–11 September:** British forces briefly occupy a temporary base at Saint-Nicolas before dropping down the river to attack Québec.
- 11 13 September:** British and French forces clash on the Plains of Abraham. In this, the first of two battles for Québec, the British climb on to the Plains having landed at l'Anse-au-Foulon; the French, having marched up from Beauport, are defeated in a few short minutes. In the second battle – known as Sainte-Foy – the relative positions will be reversed after Lévis marches up from Montréal for a bloody two-hour battle on 28 April 1760 in which the British are defeated but will remain in possession of Québec.

Coldstream Guardsman defeated near Fort Duquesne, muttered as he lay dying in July 1755: 'Who would have thought it! We shall know better how to deal with them another time.' Whether apocryphal or not the remark was unfair, for while there is no denying Braddock's defeat, there is equally no denying that when another time came the matter would be decided by European troops and European fighting tactics.

This present study is therefore intended not simply to compare and contrast the rival armies, as Lieutenant Knox so bombastically did, but also to examine the extent to which both armies adapted conventional European fighting methods to warfare in North America.



The Opposing Sides

ASSEMBLING THE ARMIES

British

OPPOSITE This illustration in the famous *Cloathing Book* provides a clear illustration of the clothing and accoutrements of a typical British soldier serving in Europe. (There were 26 regular battalions serving in North America by 1759, but only six battalions of infantry and six cavalry regiments in Germany at the time.) The combination of coat, waistcoat and breeches reflects contemporary civilian clothing, differing only in the colour and the practice of fastening back the coat skirts, partly to avoid encumbering the legs when marching and partly for smartness on parade. The thigh-length gaiters are for protection, not for show. Accoutrements comprise a cartridge box on the right hip and a sword and bayonet on the left. By the 1750s the belts would be less broad and the waist-belt worn under rather than over the coat; but the real differences would come in North America, where soldiers were prone to stripping the elaborate lace from their coats and discarding unnecessary equipment such as swords.

To all intents and purposes the British Army which fought in the French and Indian War was comprised of infantry. No cavalry units were sent to North America at this time and the Royal Artillery, although as ubiquitous as ever, was very firmly cast in a supporting role.

Those infantry units which served in North America were surprisingly varied in their origins. Just three regular battalions, the Nova Scotia garrison, were serving there prior to the outbreak of hostilities. Early in 1755 two more battalions, the 44th Foot and 48th Foot, were ordered out under Major-General Edward Braddock; both battalions were on the reduced Irish Establishment, with each company comprising just 29 rank and file besides officers and NCOs. The additional 400-odd men needed by each battalion to bring them up to their proper wartime establishment had to be found first by taking drafts of men from other units and then making up the difference through hasty recruiting on their arrival in America. The same was true of the 35th Foot and the 1/42nd Highlanders, which followed soon afterwards; then there was a pause until 1757 when nine more battalions arrived, including the 43rd Foot and 46th Foot. Finally, in mid-1758 they were joined by the 15th Foot and 58th Foot, and the 2/42nd Highlanders in July 1759. All of these units were recruited or raised in Britain, but three more regular battalions – Shirley's 50th Foot, Pepperell's 51st Foot and Gage's 80th Foot – were wholly recruited in North America, while no fewer than four battalions of the 60th (Royal American) Regiment of Foot were built up in America around a cadre of Swiss and German mercenaries, including a fair number who had originally been enlisted into France's Régiment des Volontaires-Étrangers. (Another American-raised battalion was Burton's 90th Foot, but this was created around

some independent companies in South Carolina as late as 1760. In addition, two American ranger corps, Rogers' in 1755 and Gorham's in 1761, were taken on to the regular establishment, but do not form part of this study.)

The rather cosmopolitan 60th Foot aside, recruits for these battalions were mostly enlisted at country markets and hiring fairs by small regimental parties in possession of a 'beating order', which was effectively a licence issued by the Government's War Office. This not only permitted them quite literally to beat a drum by way of advertisement and seek recruits for their own regiments within a specified area, but also required local officials such as magistrates, justices and constables to provide them with all necessary assistance. This requirement was frequently taken by those officials as an open invitation to empty the local prisons. Just as frequently, however, such kind offers were politely declined, since recruiting officers were earnestly – if a little optimistically – recommended to take only such as 'were born in the Neighbourhood of the place where they are Inlisted in and of whom you can get and give a good account' and positively instructed that no 'Strollers, Vagabonds, Tinkers, Chimney Sweepers, Colliers, or Saylor's to be Inlisted' (quoted in Guy 1985a: 210). Instead, the Army's recruits were normally young men either lacking family ties or occasionally running away from the prospect of them. They were also disproportionately found from among the labouring poor and from among weavers and other cloth-workers, both categories being vulnerable to unemployment during the periodic economic depressions of the day.

In an entirely typical example, only seven out of 89 men enlisted into Captain Hamilton Maxwell's company were aged over 30 and of the rest, no fewer than 59 fell into the comparatively narrow 16–20 age band. As to occupations, while a broad range was represented, no fewer than 62 of the men were recorded as 'labourers' – a broad term encompassing anyone who did not declare a more specific trade.

In theory, enlistment was for life. There are documented cases of old men serving in the ranks such as John Tovey, then all of 59 years old, who had his jaw shot away at Culloden in 1746. This, however, appears to have been untypical in that Tovey was also recorded as having been 'born in the army' and therefore presumably had no other home to go to. Otherwise, in practice the dramatic reductions in the size of the Army which invariably followed the happy outbreak of peace meant that discharges were to be had for the asking, and consequently most men retired by their forties if not before. Contrary to popular belief the 18th-century British Army was not some species of ambulant penal institution.





This plate depicts an ordinary British soldier of Kennedy's 43rd Regiment of Foot, standing on the Plains of Abraham, after scrambling straight up the 90ft-high slope above the beach at l'Anse-au-Foulon. He is in basic fighting order, with blankets and tents and other equipment having been left on the ship. Standing in the very centre of the British battle-line, he and his comrades have levelled their muskets and will fire what has been described as the perfect volley, decimating the oncoming Régiment de Guyenne.

The Plains of Abraham, 13 September 1759



Weapons, dress and equipment

He is armed with a .75-calibre Land Pattern musket (1) with buff leather sling. Like all British regular infantry he wears a red woollen coat (2), cuffed, lapelled and lined in the regimental facing colour, although the distinctive lace edgings have been stripped off. Under it he has a red woollen waistcoat (3) and red woollen knee breeches (4). His gaiters are of black linen, but the tops (5) above the strap are stiffened with leather for additional protection when kneeling down, and on his feet is a stout pair of black leather shoes (6). Topping off the ensemble is a black wool felt hat (7), trimmed with white lace, which was supposed to be folded and blocked into a tricorn shape but was often slouched on service.

His equipment comprises a black leather cartridge box (8) containing 24 rounds of ammunition in the form of paper cartridges containing 70 grains of powder and a lead ball, as well as spare flints and tools for his musket. On his back is a cowhide knapsack (9) normally containing spare clothing and any other possessions, but most of its contents have been left on the ship, tied up in his blanket which would normally be rolled under the top flap. On his left side is a linen haversack (10) for rations together with a 2-pint tin canteen (11) for water. His buff leather waist-belt (12) has been slung over his shoulder for comfort, and like his French counterpart he has discarded his sword and uses the belt to carry only his bayonet.

OPPOSITE A French soldier of the period, after Charles Parrocel (1688–1752). True portraits of ordinary soldiers in the 18th century are extremely rare in themselves but this sketch, although unidentified, is a particularly striking example conveying considerable strength of character. While wearing an ordinary tricorne hat, the soldier is immediately recognizable as a grenadier by his moustache – neither waxed nor curled in the manner affected by some German armies, but fierce and bushy in a distinctively Gallic style. The shoulder-straps are unusual for this period and may also be a grenadier affectation, but not at this time one which the uniform regulations had caught up with. (Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection)

French

The defenders of Canada fell into three distinct categories – or rather there were two quite different classes of regular troops, and an active militia. Reflecting the need for flexibility in defending or otherwise protecting small and widely scattered posts and settlements, the forces of the Ministère de la Marine were largely comprised of independent companies, designated *compagnies franches de la marine*. In 1751 there were eight such companies in Québec, nine in Montréal and 13 others scattered throughout western Canada. A further ten companies were added to the Canadian establishment in March 1757, but once again all of them were chronically understrength. In addition, there were 28 companies based on Île Royale (now Cape Breton Island) at the mouth of the Saint Lawrence River, although geography meant that they and the 40 companies in Canada proper were completely separate. Conversely, there were also 37 companies – later reduced to 35 – in Louisiana, which at this time stretched north as far as the Illinois country and the present US border; consequently, some of the Louisiana companies served in the defence of the Ohio forts and even as far north as Detroit.

While the officers who led these companies were often drawn from colonial families, the rank and file were recruited in metropolitan France in the usual way. Like all French soldiers they were enlisted for a relatively short period of just six years, but this could be arbitrarily extended by a couple of years at need. Although they were not required to do so, a major incentive for recruits was the encouragement extended to them to become settlers at the end of their service. Those who did were, as a matter of course, then enrolled in the militia and ironically enough, some may have later ended up in the regular French Army when the decision was taken to conscript militiamen as reinforcements.

By way of distinction from the local units, the regular French Army regiments which began arriving in Canada from 1755 were referred to as *troupes de terre* ('land forces'). Most French infantry regiments, like their British counterparts, comprised just a single battalion, but 30 of the more senior ones boasted two battalions apiece. The *troupes de terre* allocated for service in Canada were therefore drawn from the latter regiments and in each case, only the second battalion was ordered to go – the reasoning being that even if it were a total loss, the parent regiment would survive.

The wisdom of this was proven at the very outset. The first to be embarked in 1755 were the second battalions of six regiments, including the Régiment de Béarn and the Régiment de Guyenne. Unfortunately, part of the convoy was intercepted en route and eight companies were captured. Two more battalions then came across with the Marquis de Montcalm in 1756, while 1757 saw the arrival of two battalions of the Régiment de Berry, originally intended for service in India before being diverted to Canada, each with ten companies apiece rather than the usual 13. Finally, 1758 saw the arrival of two more battalions.

A major problem facing all of the French units serving in Canada was keeping up to strength. Aside from the ordinary wastage due to sickness, accidents and casualties, just as in the British service the actual strength of the ordinary fusilier companies was undermined to a degree by the practice not only of keeping the grenadiers up to strength by constantly skimming the best



men from these companies, but also by the creation of temporary company-sized detachments or *picquets*, intended to serve on detached operations, usually in conjunction with the grenadiers. Replacements were hard to find. In July 1757, a draft of 150 recruits from the Régiment des Volontaires-Étrangers arrived to reinforce the *compagnies franches de la marine* and Colonel Louis-Antoine de Bougainville brought 400 more in May 1759, but they were not going to go far and so the French turned to the militia.

All Canadians between the ages of 16 and 60 were automatically liable for service in the militia company organized in each parish. This was essentially a defensive organization, but younger men were encouraged to volunteer to serve alongside the *compagnies franches de la marine*, usually for specific operations. In metropolitan France, however, a proportion of those liable for militia service were not only conscripted (by ballot) into proper battalions for



Officers and soldiers of the Régiment de Béarn (left) and the Régiment de Guyenne (right), as portrayed by Rudolf Erich Raspe. Most Metropolitan French units at this period wore white coats with either blue or red facings. In this case the uniforms of the two regiments are at first glance identical, but distinguished by the arrangement of the buttons and by the pocket flaps on the coat: vertical for Béarn and horizontal for Guyenne. (Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection via René Chartrand)

second-line service, but were also liable to be drafted as replacements into regular regiments of the line. Faced with the difficulty of keeping both the *compagnies franches de la marine* and the *troupes de terre* up to strength without fresh drafts from Europe, Montcalm adopted the expedient of adding 15 *miliciens* to each regular company in late 1758. By 1760 a total of nearly 2,900 Canadian militia had been conscripted into the ranks of the *compagnies franches de la marine* and the *troupes de terre*, accounting for some 38 per cent of the remaining total.

LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNICATIONS

Aside from the number of companies in each battalion, the two armies were broadly very similar in terms of organization and officer structure, and also in the origins of their commissioned and non-commissioned officers and what was expected of them. Battalions were normally commanded by lieutenant-colonels or majors, and – very occasionally – temporarily by captains. In both armies, however, the primary contact between officers and men was at company level, with each company being led by a captain, with a lieutenant as his second-in-command and a couple of subaltern officers. In action the captain usually took post on the right of his company, from where he could initiate and direct its fire. A sergeant stood behind or ‘covered’ him, ready to step forward if he fell and steady the company until his successor arrived. This would normally be the lieutenant, who stood behind the company with the other sergeant or sergeants, looked after the ammunition supply and prevented straggling. Corporals had no direct command function as such but were posted on the left of each rank to ensure that it remained closed up.



Grenadier (left) and sergeant of Britain's 1st Foot Guards, c.1760, by R.A. Wymer (1849–1935). The Foot Guards did not of course serve in North America; even so, this reconstruction provides a good starting point for looking at the uniforms of 'Royal' regiments. The grenadier is instantly identified by his cloth cap. Surviving originals suggest that this depiction is a touch overscale, but nevertheless it was a jealously guarded distinction, as was the sword. He is also identified as a grenadier by the decorative brass match case on his breast, and as a member of a 'Royal' regiment not just by his blue facings but his blue breeches as well. The sergeant on the right has the same basic uniform, but his coat is cut from a better quality of cloth and consequently is a brighter shade of red. The halberd was a badge of office, often discreetly notched to be of use in measuring distances between ranks and so on, but on active service, particularly in North America, it would be replaced by a musket. Hair powder was similarly laid aside and the white gaiters, except on special occasions, replaced by black ones. (Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection)

Ordinarily, as officers fell they would be temporarily replaced by sergeants as a matter of course, but in a post-battle reorganization permanent replacements were found from three sources. If a captain was killed or incapacitated he would automatically be replaced by the battalion's senior lieutenant, rather than succeeded by his own lieutenant. This would normally involve cross-posting the senior lieutenant from a different company. Eventually, as the surviving officers shuffled up, a vacancy would be created for a junior lieutenant or ensign. Notwithstanding the supposed requirement for commissions to be purchased, there were always free commissions to be had, not least because commissions were firmly ruled not to be heritable property. Therefore the death of an officer automatically offered a free promotion to the most senior man below him and so on down, until ultimately creating a non-purchase vacancy for a new entrant as an ensign or second lieutenant. It was thus possible for a deserving senior NCO to gain a commission in this way, although on active service such vacancies normally went to what were termed 'volunteers', or in the French service, *cadets*. These were otherwise suitable young gentlemen who lacked the funding to purchase a commission, and so instead served in the ranks until such time as they might be recommended for such a vacancy.

A French drummer. Drummers were a battalion's signallers, and had a vital role in combat. The commanding officer was responsible for directing the battalion's movements and firing, but while the unaided power of the human voice was perfectly adequate on a hushed parade ground, on a battlefield it was a different matter. All formal orders, even today, are staged. First there is a call identifying the soldiers about to be commanded, then a preparatory order alerting them as to what to do, and finally an executive or signal to carry it out in unison. The latter at least – and usually the preceding call and preparatory as well – would be transmitted by the battalion's drummers who were massed close by the commanding officer for that purpose. Therefore, if the commanding officer wished the battalion to advance, for example, he would first call out 'Battalion!' This would immediately be echoed by a drum-roll; then 'By the Centre ...!' (or right or left, each with its own ruffle); and finally 'March on!' Whether or not any or all of these words of command were actually heard, the battalion would only move on hearing that final ruffle of the drums. (Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection)



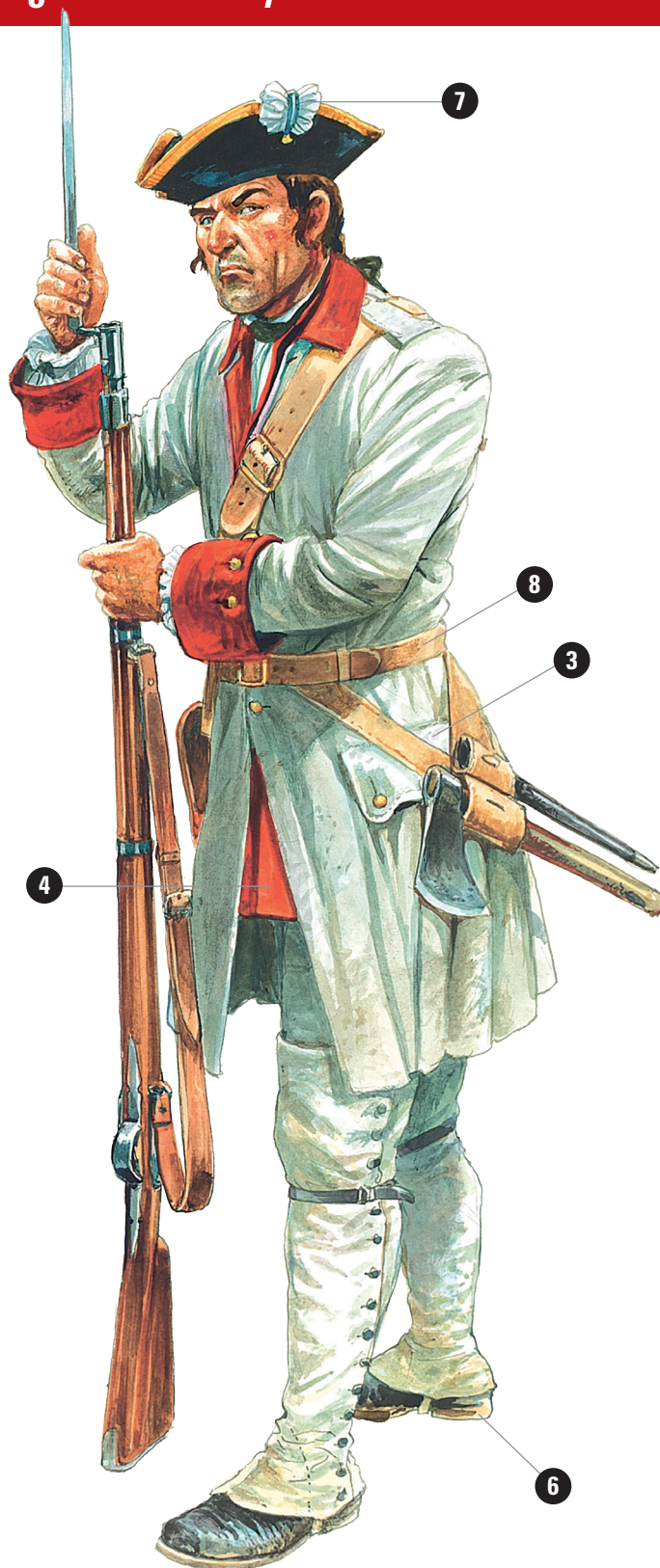
British

In the 18th century the term 'an officer and a gentleman' was interpreted literally. A landmark study of the social origins and backgrounds of British officers (Razzell 1963) found that in 1780 some 24 per cent were members of the titled aristocracy (albeit usually younger sons) and a further 16 per cent were drawn from the untitled landed gentry. Although accounting for 40 per cent of the total, even the most cursory examination of the annual *Army List* reveals that the aristocrats, unsurprisingly, were quite disproportionately concentrated in the socially elite Guards and cavalry. Consequently, far more than 60 per cent of the officers serving in the ordinary infantry regiments sent to North America belonged to what might be termed the middling classes. That is to say, they were an ill-defined spectrum of 'private gentlemen' drawn from the lesser landed families and from the families of professionals and even



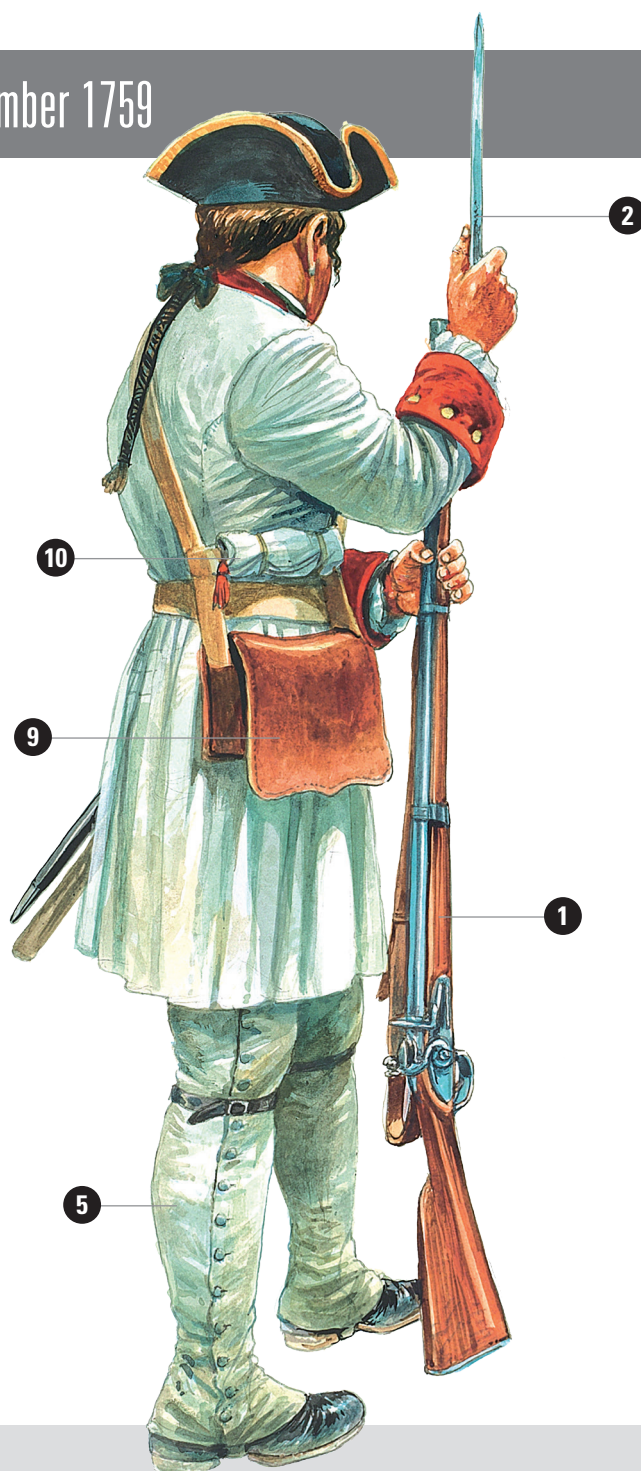
This contemporary engraved sketch of an unknown British officer evidently depicts him in an off-duty moment. Nevertheless, it provides a splendid illustration of the casual attitude taken by British officers and soldiers (then as now) to the Army's dress regulations, especially on active service. His regiment is unidentified, but plain red coats or 'frocks', lacking the coloured facings and gold or silver braid of the formal regimental coat, were worn as a working dress by most officers. The military writer Thomas Simes, for example, recommended that a newly commissioned officer should purchase two suits of frock clothing in addition to his expensive regimentals. In terms of accessories an officer's status, when on duty, ought to have been denoted by three items: a crimson silk net sash, worn over his shoulder or sometimes tied around his waist; a crescent-shaped metal gorget at his throat; and an esponton or half-pike. The latter was not carried in North America, usually being replaced by a fusil or light musket, while the sash and/or the gorget were often discarded too. (Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection)

tradesmen, but generally speaking including the sons of doctors, clergymen, farmers and the like, and above all the sons of soldiers. Some had the money with which to purchase their commissions, or at least sufficient credit to obtain a loan, but all too often they lacked it and had to rely on the patronage and 'interest' of others to begin – and make progress in – their careers. Very typically, a Captain Robert Bannatyne declared in 1759 that 'My father (a Scottish clergyman) had no great Estate and dying whilst his children were young you May guess whether five of us did not find use for small inheritance' (quoted in *Register of Madras Mayoral Court*). In this case it was Bannatyne's stepfather, another clergyman, who not only got his own son, Forbes McBean, into the Royal Artillery, but obtained a commission in the East India Company service for Robert and a commission in the regular 13th Foot for his younger brother William.



This plate depicts an ordinary *fusilier* of the Régiment de Guyenne, fixing his bayonet immediately before the column attack directed towards the 43rd Foot in which the French regiment suffered very heavy casualties. As the duty battalion, Guyenne was force-marched up on to the Plains at about 0700hrs and was therefore the first French regular unit to confront the British. In the circumstances the regiment's personnel will have dumped their packs and other impedimenta before moving off and arrived in the simple fighting order depicted here.

The Plains of Abraham, 13 September 1759



Weapons, dress and equipment

This soldier is armed with a .69-calibre Modèle 1728 musket with iron furniture and russet leather sling (1) and also a bayonet (2), but the sword which would ordinarily be carried in the lower frog on the left of his belt was not much used in Canada and a hatchet normally substituted instead.

Like all French regular soldiers serving in Canada he wears a white woollen coat with large cuffs displaying his regiment's facing colour and a unique arrangement of pocket flaps (3). Underneath is a long-skirted waistcoat of the facing colour (4), white wool knee breeches,

white linen gaiters (5) and stout leather shoes (6). On his head is a wool felt tricorne hat bound with false gold lace and decorated with a white cockade (7). His fighting equipment comprises a buff leather belt fastened around the waist (8) and a russet leather *giberne* or cartridge box containing a wooden block holding 20 rounds of ammunition in the form of paper cartridges, each containing approximately 70 grains of powder and a lead ball (9). Attached to the bracing strap of the buff leather sling for the *giberne* is a rolled-up forage cap (10).

The French *lieutenant* in this contemporary engraving displays a much more modern style of uniform than that worn by the *grenadier* on page 15, with narrow lapels and a more open pattern of coat – as worn in Canada by the Régiment de Languedoc. This Frenchman will most likely discard his gorget on active service and rely on his fusil and bayonet rather than his sword, or the half-pike or espartoon prescribed for formal parades.



French

Much the same might very well be said of the French officer corps, who also purchased their commissions, although there were differences in emphasis. Once again, the numerous aristocrats were disproportionately concentrated in the Guards units and in the cavalry, while the line-infantry officers were often men of humbler stock. Nevertheless, in the 1750s some two-thirds of officers were drawn from the landed gentry, and this proportion would rise in coming years as *roturiers* (commoners) were steadily squeezed out. This was largely because it was widely regarded as unacceptable that someone of noble blood, however impoverished, should go into trade and therefore for the likes of Alexandre Dumas' Gascon adventurer 'd'Artagnan' the only resort was the Army. Denying promotion to commoners such as Capitaine Pierre Pouchot was therefore not direct snobbery as such but rather reflected what was perceived to be the absolute necessity of reserving places for the otherwise unemployable minor gentry.

Whether, in practical terms, this actually made any real difference on active service is probably open to question, although arguably it may have meant that some of the officers were perhaps comparatively poorly educated. Conversely, with little or nothing to commend them but their swords and their good conduct, it obviously behoved them to be more attentive to their duty than those of greater means. In this connection it might also be worth observing that in the case of those regiments ordered to Canada it would be surprising if those second-battalion officers who were unwilling to stray far from the comforts of Europe did not seek to exchange with the *petite noblesse* and *roturiers* into the first battalions, resulting in a higher proportion of the latter than normal serving in Canada.

TACTICS, TRAINING AND PREPARATION

As to how the officers and men on either side carried out their duties, there was a surprising degree of variation both in existing tactical doctrines and the ways in which they were evolving at the time and how they were adapted to the prevailing conditions in Canada and North America.

Both British and French soldiers were to all intents and purposes identically equipped, with large-calibre smooth-bored flintlock muskets, tipped with bayonets. For the British Army this was, with certain exceptions, the .75-calibre Land Pattern, and for the French the .69-calibre Modèle 1728 or the updated Modèle 1746. In either case, the handling characteristics and effectiveness were pretty much the same. Accuracy was reasonably good at short range but at distances in excess of 100yd it dropped off very dramatically. Ideally, most firing was conducted at 50yd or less, but this posed an awkward tactical problem. In very simple terms the flintlock took between 20 and 30 seconds to reload properly, yet because the firefight was commonly conducted at such a short range, a resolute foe might be able to close the distance sufficiently to trigger the fight-or-flight reaction during those vital seconds – especially if the defending unit was already displaying signs of nervousness, including firing too fast and too wildly. Tactical doctrines were therefore framed either to prevent that outcome or to facilitate it, and as it happened those methods adopted by the British and French armies were quite different.

British

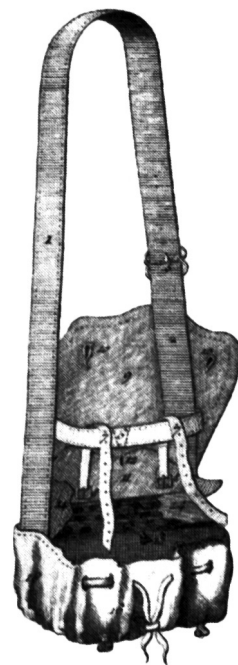
For over half a century the cornerstone of British infantry tactics had been the platoon-firing system, founded upon Humphrey Bland's *Treatise of Military Discipline*, first published in 1727 and going through no fewer than nine editions up to 1762. This was effectively adopted as the official *Exercise for the Horse, Dragoons and Foot Forces*, which again went through successive editions and impressions between 1728 and 1743. By 1759 it was becoming outdated, and had officially been superseded by the 1757 *Regulations*, but promulgation was not fully followed through until the publication of the 1764 *Regulations*.

At the outset of an action the battalion was to be drawn up in a line three ranks deep. Then, with the exception of the grenadiers who were split into two small platoons and posted to guard either flank, the men were told off into four equally sized divisions for manoeuvring purposes without any regard as to which company they actually belonged. At the same time, within each division the men would also be told off into platoons for fire-control purposes. Experience had soon taught that the optimal size of a platoon was between 30 and 50 men, and so normally there were three platoons in each division. These platoons would then in turn be allocated to one of three (or occasionally four) 'Firings', with the exception once again of the grenadiers, who fired as they saw fit. On the command to open fire being given and transmitted by a ruffle of drums, only those platoons belonging to the First Firing would deliver their volleys, being followed in turn by those of the Second Firing and then the Third. By then the First Firing ought to have reloaded and would be ready, if so required, to recommence what amounted to a continuous rolling fire, which either rippled out from the centre to the flanks or from the flanks into the centre. Any Fourth Firing would constitute a reserve under the direct control of the commanding officer.

Platooning was not without its drawbacks, and during the course of the campaign in North America it was superseded by the much simpler Alternate system. This was described by the future Major-General Wolfe as early as 1755. Before embarking on field exercises or active service, the eight centre or battalion companies were 'levelled'; that is, men were temporarily cross-posted to ensure that each company was approximately the same size, and then the companies were paired to form the grand divisions in the French manner, as Wolfe went on to explain:

Every grand division consisting of two companies as they now are, is to be told off into three platoons, to be commanded by a captain, a lieutenant, and an ensign, with a serjeant to each [division]; the rest of the officers and non-commissioned officers are to be distributed in the rear to keep compleat the files, to keep the men in their duty, and to supply the places of the officers or serjeants that may be killed or dangerously wounded. (Wolfe 1780: 47)

However, by 1759 Wolfe had introduced a further refinement. Instead of dividing each pair of companies into three platoons for the unsuccessful attack on the French lines at Montmorency, Lieutenant-Colonel Demetrius James and Major Robert Elliot of the 43rd Foot 'agreed that the regiment should embark, land, and fight *by companies* under their own Officers', which as Lieutenant Knox of the 43rd Foot noted, 'afforded the highest satisfaction to the soldiers; this method, or a service of this nature, does not admit of



Ammunition was generally carried in a leather pouch on the left hip. This particular example is a French *giberne* as introduced in the 1730s. British pouches were broadly similar in design. Both featured an integral wooden block drilled with holes or a 'magazine' formed of tin tubes, each for a single cartridge. Ammunition capacity varied quite widely from as few as nine cartridges to as many as 36. The belly box or *gargousier*, fastened around the waist, was also used, sometimes on its own, or by way of carrying additional ammunition.



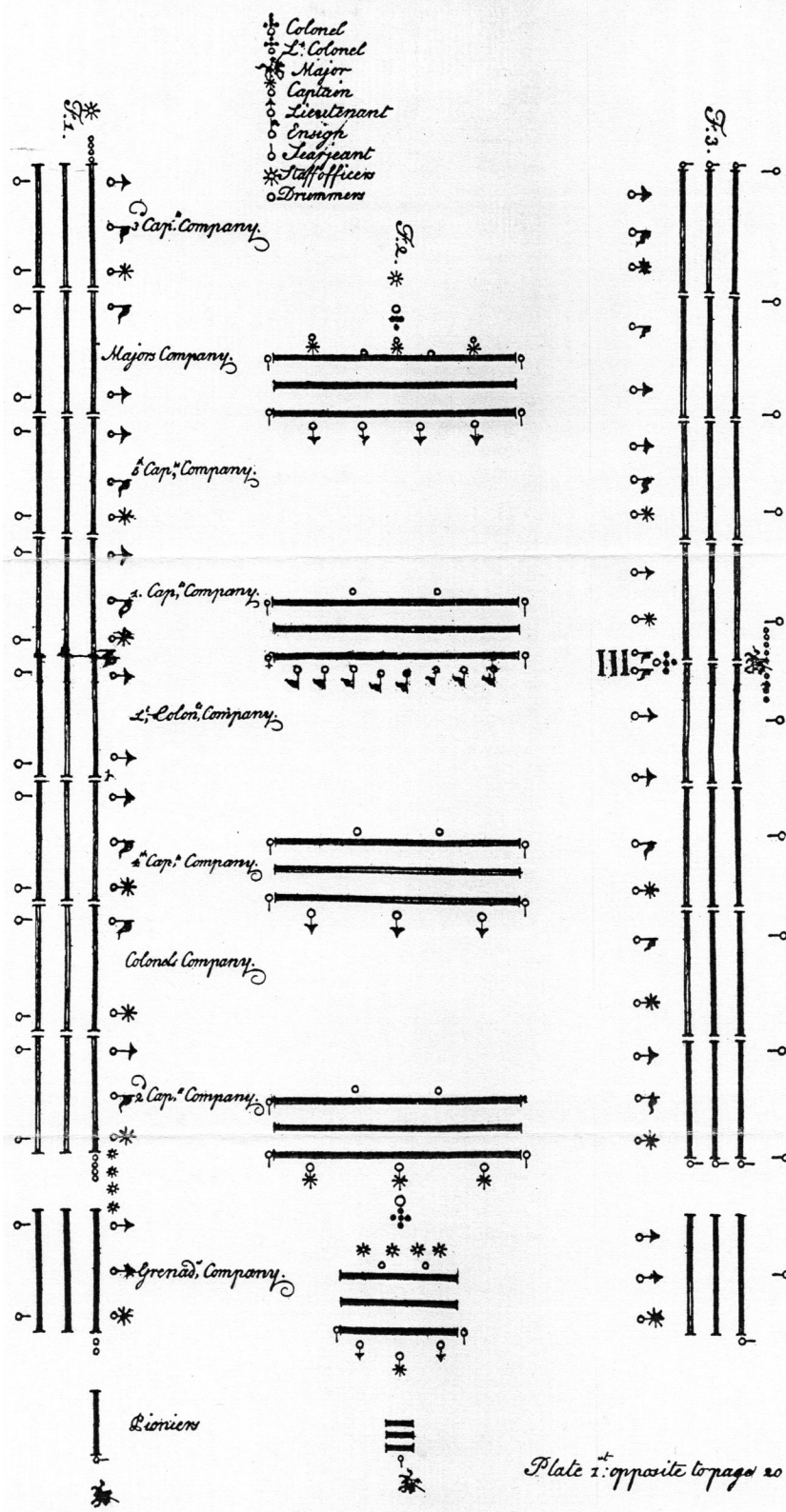
Both sides were pretty universally armed with firelocks or flintlock muskets like this British .75 Land Pattern Firelock. This example has been cut down from 46in to 36in – a common expedient during the campaigns in North America. Performance was very similar to the French .69 Fusil Modèle 1746, although British writers considered that the slightly heavier .75 ball gave them an edge in combat. (Courtesy of the Museum of Lancashire)

confusion' (Knox 1914: 1.451). No doubt it did, but more importantly the Alternate system, as it was known, meant exactly what it said and rather than endeavour to coordinate the volleys of the different firings up and down the battle-line, the paired companies simply fired alternately.

The Alternate system was also well suited to the British Army's training regime, or arguably the lack of one. Proper barracks were few and far between which ordinarily meant that in peacetime soldiers had to be accommodated in billets – usually in inns or, very occasionally, private houses. Usually, therefore, this meant that battalions were scattered over a wide area. This in turn meant that training was for the most part restricted to company level, which in practice entailed little more than basic foot drill and the manual exercise (weapon-handling), rather than manoeuvring and co-ordinated platoon firing. In short, however, it did mean that in modern terms soldiers were well trained in individual battle-skills. In wartime, obviously, once the battalion was concentrated and encamped in one location it was possible to graduate to more advanced training. Nevertheless, most training was still carried out at company level. A surviving orderly book for the 42nd Highlanders commencing at New York on 18 February 1759 shows the soldiers exercising every day, but it was not until 21 March that the whole regiment paraded as such. Then on 3 April it was ordered that 'The Regt to be under arms at half an hour after 9 o'clock tomorrow. Each man to have a good flint in his pocket as they are to fire at marks.' Previously they had been exercising with wooden wedges rather than flints, but now they were ordered out again the following day and the day after that, with a reminder given that 'All the shooting boards to be covered with paper and a black spot made in the middle' (Black Watch Archives).

This emphasis on individual marksmanship, and the creation of temporary 'light' companies in each regiment, was a clear response to the battlefield environment in North America and so too was the battalion-level training itself. On 30 May 1759, Lieutenant John Knox of the 43rd Foot (then serving under Wolfe) provided a succinct description of their tactical repertoire:

The first brigade of the army, with the Louisburg Grenadiers, landed today for exercise; they performed several manoeuvres in the presence of the general officers, such as charging in the line of battle, forming the line into columns, and reducing them; dispersing, rallying and again forming in columns, and in line of battle alternately, with several other evolutions; which were all so well executed, as to afford the highest satisfaction to the generals. The weather, though cold, favoured our performance; but the ground was swampy and uncomfortable. The troops have been daily engaged in these exercises, whenever the weather permitted. (Knox 1914: 1.353)



This plate is taken from the 1764 Regulations, but accurately reflects the deployment of infantry battalions five years earlier. It will immediately be noted that there are eight paired battalion companies or platoons forming four divisions, and a grenadier company. Although this reflects the peacetime establishment of that date, with no light company, in Canada the light companies were always detached to serve in composite light-infantry battalions, leaving just the nine companies depicted here. Note also the disposition of the officers and sergeants on parade. In combat they would in fact fall back into and behind the ranks, with the captain on the right of the front rank of each company and the lieutenant on the left of the rear rank.



Many French soldiers were armed with the similar but lighter Fusil Modèle 1746, popularly known as a Charleville. Opinion was divided as to the weapon's merits, but significantly, those British and American soldiers who could get their hands on the Charleville appear to have preferred its easier handling qualities. This example was captured and modified by British colonial militia. (NRA Museums, NRAMuseums.com)

French

French fighting tactics were largely based upon the *Instruction sur l'Exercice de l'Infanterie*, published on 14 May 1754. This represented an important modernization of infantry doctrine, not least in reducing the depth of firing lines from four ranks to three – the six-rank assault column thus being formed either by doubling the ranks or stacking companies behind each other, and officially recognizing and indeed encouraging the development of a *feu de billebaude* – a rapid but disorderly firing at will, delivered by every man with a musket – during an extended firefight. In theory the *compagnies franches de la marine* were still using the 1750 *Instruction* (and a four-rank formation), as an updated version had not yet been issued. In practice, given Montcalm's and Lévis' attempts to integrate the services, it would be surprising if their formations and exercise had not been brought up to date.

The British obsession with fire tactics was not shared by their French counterparts. While perfectly capable of firing by platoons, the French preference was for firing by ranks. Although it was theoretically possible for well-trained troops to close up sufficiently for the four ranks prescribed in the 1750 *Instruction* to fire together, with two kneeling and two standing, in practical terms three ranks was about the limit, although this was not officially sanctioned until the *Instruction* of 1754 and confirmed by another new manual exercise in 1755. It seems to have been generally agreed by most commentators of the day that the resulting initial volley or series of volleys delivered by French troops was heavy and frequently effective. The problem, however, lay in sustaining it. More often than not, if those initial volleys by ranks were not immediately followed up by a bayonet charge, any meaningful form of fire control was cast to the winds as the troops engaged in a *feu de billebaude*.

Instead of trying to rectify this, the influential Chevalier de Folard found a receptive audience in promoting what would eventually become the cult of the bayonet. The French character, he reckoned, 'is infinitely better suited for shock and for coups de main than for standing still and firing' (quoted in Chandler 1976: 131). Thus, by and large French officers looked not to the musket itself, but to the bayonet fixed on the end of it. Instead of focusing on winning the firefight, they preached instead the twin virtues of mobility and decisive shock, delivered by columns charging with the bayonet. It should be stressed, however, that French tactical doctrine did not rely upon the bayonet alone, but instead endeavoured to combine fire and movement. The assault columns would be flanked by other units formed in line both to provide direct fire support for them and to hinder any attempt to envelope the columns; this would be most clearly demonstrated, albeit disastrously, on the Plains of Abraham.

It should perhaps be noted that although some thought was being given to it, movements were not cadenced and the speed of a unit's advance was not

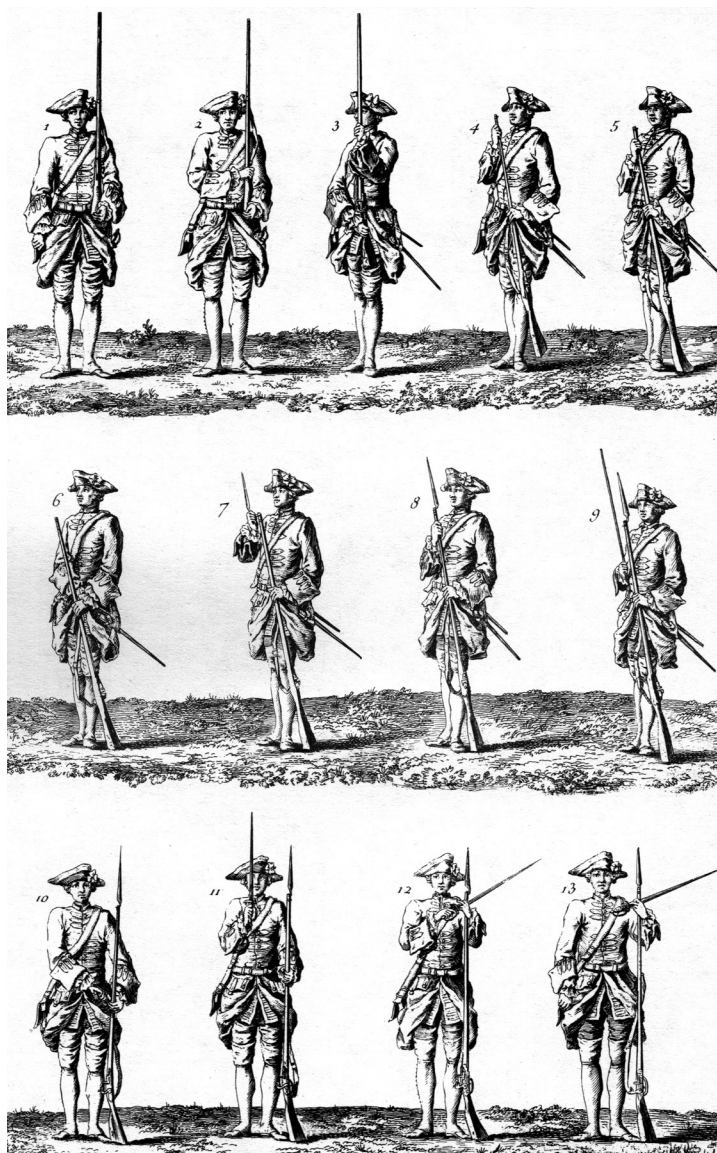
OPPOSITE Most drill-books of the day, modelled on Jacob de Gheyn's *Wapenhandelinge* of 1607, contained a series of detailed pictures illustrating exactly how weapon-handling was to be carried out, step by step. This page from the French *Ordonnance du Roy de 6 May 1755* is a particularly good example of the genre, providing a visual description of how to fix bayonets and then draw swords for inspection in a smart and soldierly manner. It should be emphasized of course that it was depicted in this way for instructional purposes only, and that ordinarily separate words of command were not required for each individual step.

regulated except by the need to halt periodically and dress or straighten the ranks, both within the unit and in conformity with others. Column formations were advocated not simply because they were more manoeuvrable but because there was far less need to halt and dress the ranks. Maréchal Saxe, for one, was of the opinion that 'I am eight ranks deep against men who are only four deep; I have nothing to check me, no loss of dressing or crowding up; I shall cover 200 paces sooner than they will cover 100' (quoted in Chandler 1976: 134).

Like the British, the French made every effort to prepare the French regulars for the peculiarities of warfare in North America. As early as September 1758 Montcalm had justified the incorporation of 15 Canadian militia in each company of regulars on the hopeful grounds that they 'would thus imbibe the military spirit and perform the same service as our soldiers'; he continued:

The advantage of this incorporation is, that each company of the Line and Marine will have with it and in it some excellent marksmen, some excellent canoemen and some excellent workmen; that, in emulation, the one of the other, the soldier and the Canadian will operate on each other as a spur to act well, and will mutually teach each one another things they know; remedy the inconvenience of not having enough officers in the Colony to lead the Militia, watch them and derive advantage from them. (Quoted in Pouchot 1994: 242)

Whether this influx of *miliciens* into the ranks thereby degraded the quality of the regulars is moot. Certainly, Capitaine Pouchot of the Régiment de Béarn crustily disapproved: 'These men who are only suited to petit-guerre & who were in any case poorly armed since they only had simple hunting muskets without bayonets, were a hindrance to the operation'; he also claimed that the British volley fire at



Québec ‘shook the nerve of the Canadians, who had little experience of being under fire. They broke ranks & fled’ (Pouchot 1994: 241–42). There may, however, be an element of exaggeration in this by way of excusing the regulars’ failure. At least some of the militia must have previously served in the *compagnies franches de la marine*, and in any case most of those who fought at Québec in September 1759 ought by then to have been properly assimilated into the ranks and appropriately armed.

LOGISTICS AND MORALE

For both sides, logistics presented obvious challenges, created by the vast distances involved, but on the whole the troops contrived to be well fed and properly supplied almost up to the end. If British troops found themselves short of food and suffering from scurvy during their defence of Québec that was a reflection of their spending the winter in a hostile countryside devoid of fresh food, while the French besieging force, if initially healthier, was weakened by camping in the open in poor weather. Rather more seriously, the French – at long last, after years of conflict – only then found that they lacked the ammunition to prosecute their siege properly.

Notwithstanding, in general terms morale remained high on both sides throughout the conflict all the way up to the final French surrender at Montréal in 1760. That is not to say there were no disciplinary problems, but while there was always a dribble of deserters it was not endemic. There was a decided feeling that the many German soldiers were prone to changing their employer, whether they came out with the Régiment des Volontaires-Étrangers or with ordinary reinforcement drafts for both the *compagnies franches de la marine* and the *troupes de terre*, or were originally enlisted in the 60th Foot. As they were mercenaries this was perhaps only to be expected, but native British and French soldiers deserted too. Punishment was summary: Knox records a deserter from the 60th Foot found wounded on the Plains of Abraham being shot on the spot. Taken as a whole, however, such behaviour was unusual and easily checked.

Rather more problematic was the relationship between regular and colonial troops, although it would probably be fair to say that the difficulties have often been exaggerated by historians. There was certainly a destructive rivalry between Vaudreuil, the Governor of New France (himself an experienced soldier) and Montcalm, the commander of the *troupes de terre*. However, after Montcalm’s death, Lévis succeeded admirably in knitting regulars and colonials together into a more cohesive whole. Similarly, on the British side the American Sir William Johnson had little difficulty in assuming command of the British forces before Niagara after his predecessor was careless enough to walk in front of his own artillery. The refusal of the British Army to grant a regular commission to a Virginian aristocrat named George Washington is cited as evidence of prejudice against colonials, but in fact the real sticking point was in Washington’s desire to have a colonel’s commission without the drudgery of working his way up through the ranks in the ordinary way. Other Americans, such as James De Lancey, who were prepared to do so had no difficulty in making their way – and one of them, a fellow New Yorker named Staats Long Morris, died as a lieutenant-general!

La Belle-Famille

24 July 1759

BACKGROUND TO BATTLE

An important element in British strategy was the elimination of the French outpost at Fort Niagara, a vital link in the chain of waterways linking Canada with Louisiana to the south and with Detroit and the Upper Great Lakes to the west. Consequently, by the summer of 1756 Capitaine Pierre Pouchot of the Régiment de Béarn had remodelled the outpost into a small but perfectly formed European-style fortress, replete with ramparts, ditch, glacis and artillery. Even so, by 1759 the French were divided as to its immediate importance. The Governor of New France, the Marquis de Vaudreuil, was keen to maintain it at all costs, while the commander of the *troupes de terre*, Montcalm, on the other hand, opined that its isolation made it vulnerable and wanted the garrison withdrawn before it was too late. On this occasion Vaudreuil prevailed, but was persuaded in return to reappoint Pouchot, rather than a Canadian officer, to command the post.

In the British service it would have been normal for a detached garrison such as Niagara to be formed around a single core unit, whether comprising a company, a wing or a complete battalion as appropriate. The French, however, preferred to spread the burden rather than risk the complete loss of a major unit. Therefore although Pouchot was assigned some 232 regulars, the equivalent of a half-battalion, they were comprised of four ad hoc picquets drawn from the regiments Béarn, Guyenne, La Sarre and Royal-Roussillon, totalling 149 men,

Shown here in a portrait (c.1765–68) by Sir Joshua Reynolds, Jeffery, Lord Amherst (1717–97) was appointed Commander-in-Chief North America in the wake of Abercrombie's disastrous defeat at Ticonderoga on 8 July 1758. As such Amherst would lead the central thrust northwards to Lake Champlain and Ticonderoga in 1759. (National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; photograph René Chartrand)





Pierre de Rigaud, Marquis de Vaudreuil (1698–1778) was the Canadian-born Governor-General of New France between 1755 and 1760, when he surrendered to the British at Montréal. While patronage played a strong part in his rise to prominence, he was in fact a genuinely talented administrator and experienced soldier who worked tirelessly to protect New France against multiple offensives. Unfortunately, his defence of the colonies was hampered by a fatal lack of resources and his reputation suffered badly at the expense of the metropolitan Lieutenant général de Montcalm and his supporters. Nevertheless, after a brief period of imprisonment in the Bastille, he was exonerated by a court of inquiry in 1763.

while the remaining 183 men belonged to the *compagnies franches de la marine* under Capitaine Charles-Rene de la Roche Verney and Capitaine Philippe Thomas Chabert de Joincaire. In addition there were 133 Canadian militia, and 21 artillerymen under Lieutenant Jean-Baptiste Bonnafox de Caminel of the Régiment Royal-Artillerie.

Against them on 6 July 1759 came Brigadier-General John Prideaux and some 2,200 regulars and provincials, besides some 876 Indian warriors under Lieutenant-Colonel Sir William Johnson, founder and Director of the Indian Department. It took the British a month and a half to arrive and had they not been able to travel largely by boat it would have taken even longer – and they would almost certainly have been unable to carry their heavy artillery at all.

In May, Lieutenant-Colonel William Farquhar's 44th Foot and Lieutenant-Colonel Frederick Haldimand's 4/60th Foot were encamped at Albany, on the Hudson River in Upper New York. There they were soon joined by the 46th Foot under the crusty Lieutenant-Colonel Eyre Massey, two strong battalions of New York provincials under Colonel John Johnston (not to be confused with Sir William Johnson), and a Royal Artillery detachment led by Captain Samuel Strachey. Starting on 19 May they first had to march overland, one battalion at a time, some 16 miles north-west to Schenectady on the Mohawk River. This was a portage trail avoiding the rapids at the junction of the Mohawk and Hudson and once arrived there, Prideaux then needed to get them all embarked on a mixture of whaleboats, and flatboats known as *bateaux*, which also carried his guns and all of the expedition's supplies. Predictably, he quickly discovered there were insufficient boats at Schenectady, and even then the condition of many of the boats was so bad that Prideaux declared in a letter to Major-General Amherst, the British commander-in-chief in North America, that he 'trembled' for their safety (TNA WO 34/46). Amherst obligingly set about recruiting over 500 more boatmen. In the meantime, Prideaux embarked the 44th Foot on 23 May together with 77 boatloads of flour and salt pork, gradually sending off the rest after them as and when sufficient boats were available. Their immediate destination was Fort Stanwix, some 107 miles further up the Mohawk; it would take Prideaux until 14 June finally to assemble the bulk of his forces there.

Even as the rear of the British column was closing up on Fort Stanwix, a portage trail was being cut overland to the nearby Wood Creek. Nevertheless, it still took a further week to drag or carry all the boats, guns and supplies over the portage and down the creek to Lake Oneida. From there, however, the going was somewhat easier and on 22 June they all set off along the lake in military formation. The advance was led by the grenadiers and light infantry of the 44th Foot and 46th Foot, embarked 16 men to a whaleboat, followed by three long columns of *bateaux*, carrying the battalion companies of the 46th Foot in the centre together with the Royal Artillery detachment and its guns, flanked on the right by the battalion companies of the 44th Foot and 4/60th Foot and on the left by the two battalions of New York provincials, while the light infantry and the grenadiers of the 4/60th Foot, again embarked in whaleboats, formed the rearguard.

Such was the distance involved that it still took a further five days to traverse the length of the lake and then descend the Oswego River to reach

Lake Ontario. There, Prideaux established a base camp near the remains of Fort Oswego, which had been captured and demolished by the French back in 1756. Next, he reorganized his forces for the final advance to contact. Ten companies of picked men each comprising one captain, two lieutenants, four sergeants and 65 men were drawn from the New York Regiment and assembled in a separate camp on the west bank of the river, together with the 44th Foot, the 46th Foot, the grenadiers and light infantry of the 4/60th Foot and about 20 men of the Royal Artillery under Captain Strachey, for a total of some 2,200 regulars and provincials.

Leaving behind the remainder of the forces under Lieutenant-Colonel Haldimand of the 4/60th Foot to construct a new fort, Prideaux embarked his little army early on the morning of 1 July for a voyage of some 150 miles westwards. Skirting the edge of Lake Ontario, they managed about 30–35 miles a day, coming ashore each evening, and so arrived just a few miles from Niagara late in the afternoon of 6 July.

The siege which then followed was an entirely conventional one conducted by both sides in accordance with best European practice of the time. After a formal summons, the British opened a battery, sapped or dug their way forward from it, established another battery much closer to the fort and then sapped forward again to establish a third battery almost at the foot of the glacis. The course of the siege was remarkable only for an extraordinary series of misfortunes on 20 July. First, Lieutenant-Colonel Michael Thodey of the New York Regiment was shot in the leg, then Colonel Johnston of the same regiment was killed: ‘the fatal shot struck him & immediately put an End to his valuable Life. It was a Musquet Ball, & entered under his arm, & so through his lungs.’ Worse still, continued Chaplain Ogilvie, ‘It being almost dark, & the Genl. [Prideaux] just passing one of the Batteries, as the Gunner was firing one of the Cohorns [mortars], the Shell struck him in the back of his Head, & put an immediate Period to his life’ (quoted in Dunnigan 1986: 58–59). Notwithstanding, the siege continued and although Capitaine Pouchot resisted obstinately he faced defeat unless he could be rescued by a relief force.

One was indeed at hand under the command of Capitaine François Le Marchand de Lignery and Capitaine Charles Philippe Aubry, both officers of the *compagnies franches de la marine*. Word of Pouchot’s plight had reached



A typical British infantryman on active service, after a contemporary watercolour sketch by Paul Sandby. While the uniform is broadly similar to that worn by the *Cloathing Book* illustration on page 11, the overall appearance is more modern in character. Marking him out as a veteran of the American wars is his knapsack. This was originally a duffle-bag or tubular stuff-sack, slung diagonally by a single strap, but in North America the soldiers adopted an Indian style of knapsack, worn squarely on the back by a strap over each shoulder. It will also be noted that the waist-belt has been moved under the coat and the sword has been discarded.

Lignery and Aubry on 12 July and they immediately set off northwards from Venango with approximately 600–700 French soldiers (including Detroit militia) and perhaps as many and more Indians, although all of the estimates are tolerably vague. As with the British force, the French contingent's approach was largely made by water. First, they travelled up the Allegheny River to Fort le Boeuf, then over the portage to Fort de la Presqu'île on the shores of Lake Erie. From there it was a straightforward passage across the lake to the head of the Niagara River, which they then paddled down to just above the great falls. Landing on the east bank on 22 July, the French reached a portage road that stretched a relatively short distance due north to the fort.

At this point matters became unusually complicated. The French officers quite naturally wanted to establish contact with Pouchot in the fort, so four of their Indian warriors were sent off to him carrying letters. These were delivered safely next morning, but on the way the messengers had stopped to talk with the Iroquois warriors attached to the British army. The upshot was an agreement that neither had any quarrel with the other and so would not fight each other in the coming battle!

Immediately following the near-simultaneous deaths of Prideaux and Johnston and the wounding of Thodey, Lieutenant-Colonel Sir William Johnson had assumed command of the besieging forces. This was a rather unorthodox proceeding. Ordinarily, it should have fallen to the senior regular officer present, Eyre Massey of the 46th Foot, but he himself was outranked within the expeditionary force by Haldimand back at Oswego. It would obviously take some time to advise Haldimand of the situation and bring him forward, and in the meantime Johnson announced that he was taking command. The regular officers were naturally unhappy at this, since Johnson was not only a provincial officer but his role thus far had been to manage the substantial Indian contingent. Nevertheless, mindful of the fact that they were effectively isolated in a howling wilderness, they acquiesced until such time as Haldimand arrived. Oddly enough, in his capacity as Indian Agent, Johnson was actually present at the meeting when Lignery's messengers addressed the Iroquois! He therefore had timely warning of the arrival of the French relief column. Even so, his options for dealing with it were limited.

Leaving the Indians out of the equation on both sides, the British had rather more men present, but they faced the age-old problem that it was necessary for some of them to remain in the trenches in order to contain the defenders and prevent their intervening in the battle or at the very least making a havoc of the siege-works. Comparatively few were available to meet the French in open battle and even then it was considered unwise to deploy them until the French intentions were more certainly known. The nature of the heavily wooded ground meant that there was probably only one practicable line of approach – straight down the portage road from the Falls. Johnson therefore chose to receive them in a clearing, known as La Belle-Famille. Accordingly, on 23 July the three light companies, each just 50 strong, were sent down there under Captain James De Lancey of the 46th Foot to serve as a trip-wire to alert the main camp a mile further back. On arrival, De Lancey and his men very sensibly threw up a rather irregularly shaped log breastwork and settled down for the night behind it.



The troops of the *compagnies franches de la marine* who were gathered together for the relief of Niagara wore a white coat lined and faced with blue, a long-sleeved blue waistcoat, breeches and stockings, as in this depiction by Eugène Lelièvre. It should be noted, however, that units serving out west tended to discard encumbrances such as swords and make practical adaptations to their clothing such as the use of *mitasses* or blanket leggings. Capitaine de Lignery had once been the commandant of Fort Du Quesne; forced by the British to abandon that post, he latterly based himself at Fort Machault (near present-day Franklin, Pennsylvania), about 180 miles south of Niagara. At first Lignery had just two *compagnies franches de la marine*, but back in June Pouchot had forwarded to him a reinforcement of two more companies under Capitaine Montigny and Capitaine Repetigny, together with a large number of Native Americans. Originally, the intention of this concentration was to try to recapture Fort Du Quesne, but saving Niagara now assumed a more immediate priority and Lignery was quickly joined by two more companies from Fort de Chartre under Capitaine Aubry and some 150 militia from the Detroit area commanded by Colonel Douville de Quindre. While Lignery's four companies were Canadian-based, Aubry's men, including the Detroit militia, fell under the jurisdiction of Louisiana. There are no known dress distinctions between Lignery's companies and Aubry's. (Courtesy Parks Canada via René Chartrand)

The 46th Foot and *compagnies franches de la marine* at La Belle-Famille, 24 July 1759

MAP KEY

1 0600hrs: Having established an outpost in an abandoned camp-site on the afternoon of 23 July, Captain James De Lancey's light-infantry force sends a detachment to borrow an artillery piece; en route, the detachment is ambushed in the woods by Indian allies of the French.

2 0600hrs: In response, the picquets of the day – three 50-man detachments drawn from the 44th Foot, 46th Foot and New York Regiment, who are responsible for the security of the camp – are immediately sent down to reinforce the light infantry, probably forming a hasty battle-line astride the portage road with De Lancey's light infantry on their left and the river on their right.

3 0615hrs: On the arrival of the 46th Foot the picquets split up, with the 46th Foot and New York Regiment companies now forming on the left of the British line beyond the light infantry, and the 44th Foot company, together with the newly arrived grenadiers of the 46th Foot, forming at the top of the bluff on the extreme right of the line.

4 0630hrs: Within 25 minutes of the alarm being raised, Lieutenant-Colonel Eyre Massey has arrived on the field, formed a battle-line and then ordered his men to lie down – a decision that may well determine the outcome of the battle.

5 0800hrs: Seemingly unaware of Massey's arrival, the French emerge from the tree-line to the south in two columns,

each led by a plain white colour, marching on either side of the road. The column on the right, led by Capitaine de Lignery, is comprised of four Canadian-based *compagnies franches de la marine*, while the column on the left, comprising two Louisiana-based *compagnies franches de la marine*, is under Capitaine Aubry.

6 0830hrs: Intending to burst straight through the British picquet line, the two French columns move up to within 35yd before Massey's battle-line stands up and unleashes a succession of withering volleys. Brought to a sudden halt, the French try to deploy into line, but with the grenadiers of the 46th Foot under Captain Marsh enfilading them at point-blank range, the Louisiana companies collapse almost at once without completing the manoeuvre. The Canadian companies on their right do briefly succeed in deploying, but with many of their officers killed and wounded they too start to waver and within a matter of moments are swept away when Massey orders a bayonet charge.

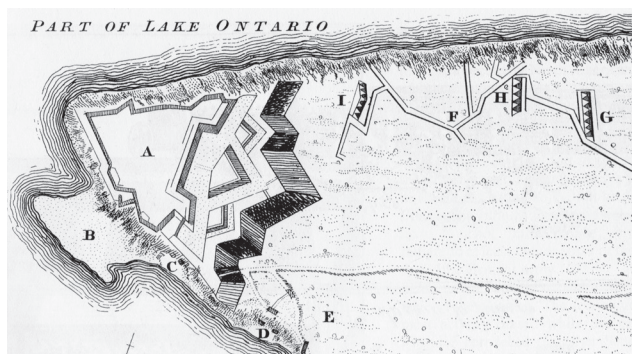
7 0900hrs: During the action at La Belle-Famille the British 'Third Parallel' and entrenchment is manned by the blue-coated (but half-naked) New York Regiment, backed up by a reserve comprising the grenadier companies of the 44th Foot and 4/60th Foot under Lieutenant-Colonel Farquhar. Towards the end of the action Pouchot contemplates a sally from the fort, but this is aborted upon the realization that the trenches are still fully manned.

Battlefield environment

The origin of the name La Belle-Famille is unknown, but probably recalls a wayside Catholic shrine. The actual battlefield at La Belle-Famille was a generally flat area of former woodland, still dotted about with individual trees and sufficient secondary growth of scrub, saplings and the litter of an abandoned Iroquois camp to provide a degree of concealment for the 46th Foot. The uncleared woods to the west and south of the battlefield were open enough to allow

movement through them, but at the same time were infested with enough Indian warriors on either side to discourage any movement far from the unsurfaced portage road running north–south across the field. Pouchot records a brief rain squall during the battle and suggests it may have had an effect on the soldiers' muskets, but none of the actual participants refer to it and the squall may actually have passed between the fort and the battlefield.

A detail from a contemporary engraved plan of Fort Niagara copied from a map drawn on the spot by a Swiss officer, Ensign George Demler of the 60th Foot. This omits the internal detail of the fort, but demonstrates that it was no mere frontier stockade but a properly designed and constructed European-style fortress in the North American wilderness. Brigadier-General Prideaux had no alternative but to besiege it as such 'in form' and Demler's map clearly shows the succession of trenches and batteries moving ever closer. Once the third battery started blasting the defences at close range, Pouchot would inevitably have had to surrender. All that could then save him was the approaching relief column led by Lignery and Aubry.



Lake Ontario

Fort
Niagara

Niagara River

British units

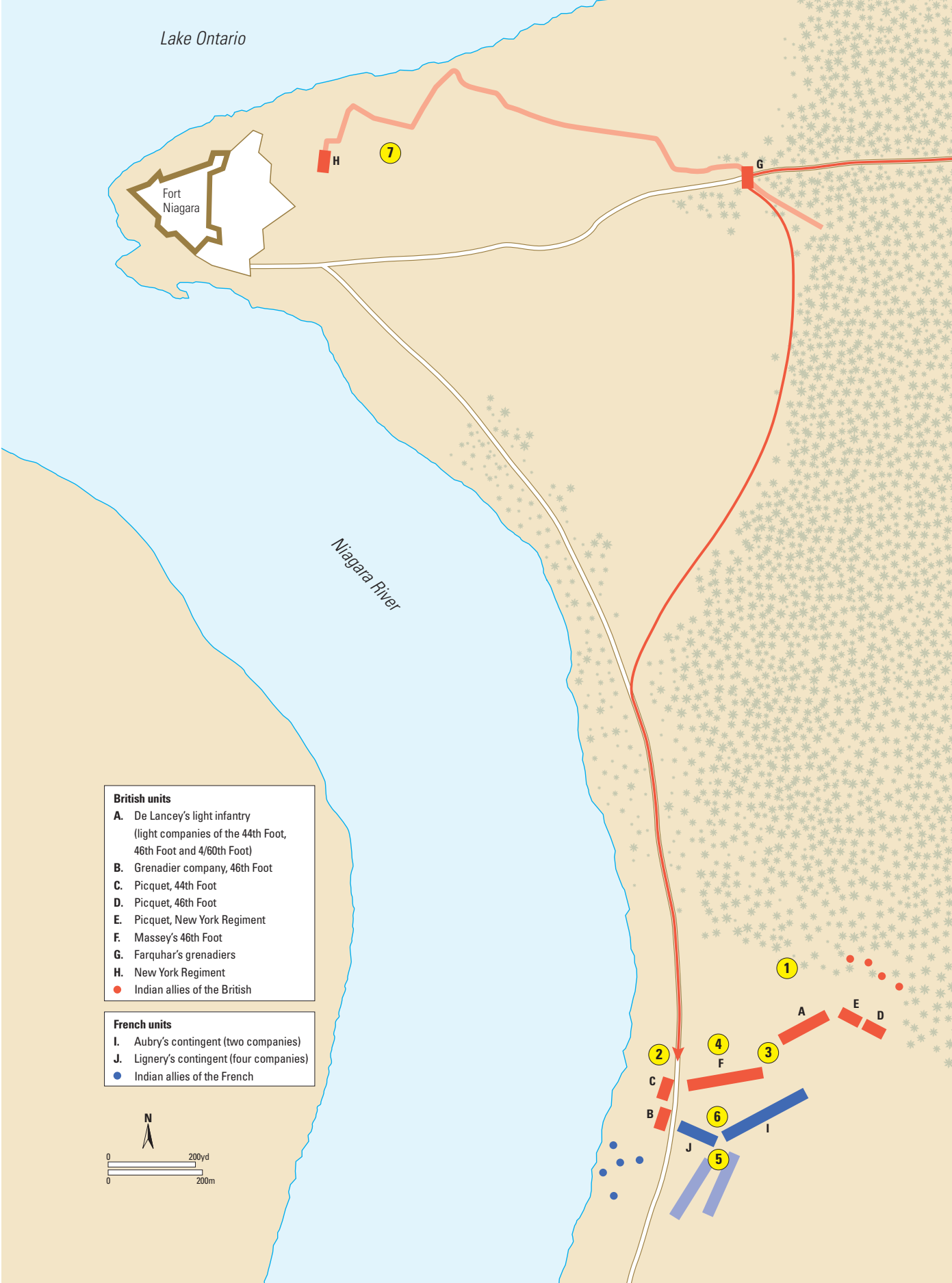
- A. De Lancey's light infantry
(light companies of the 44th Foot,
46th Foot and 4/60th Foot)
- B. Grenadier company, 46th Foot
- C. Picquet, 44th Foot
- D. Picquet, 46th Foot
- E. Picquet, New York Regiment
- F. Massey's 46th Foot
- G. Farquhar's grenadiers
- H. New York Regiment
- Indian allies of the British

French units

- I. Aubry's contingent (two companies)
- J. Lignery's contingent (four companies)
- Indian allies of the French



0 200yd
0 200m



Indian warriors such as this one, based on a 'noble savage'-like figure in Benjamin West's painting of the *Death of Wolfe*, formed a significant part of the French relief force but were very effectively neutralized by an agreement with their counterparts on the British side to take no part in the white man's battle. This appears to be the only occasion on which this happened, since none went up the Saint Lawrence with Wolfe and consequently they appeared only on the French side at Québec and Sainte-Foy. Contemporaries were quick to condemn their propensity for hanging back until an engagement was decided, but they were neither trained nor equipped for European-style warfare. In the woods it was a different matter, and ultimately ranger and then regular light-infantry tactics were in large part based on their 'skulking way of war'.

INTO COMBAT

Captain De Lancey and his men slept undisturbed and on the morning of 24 July continued improving their miniature fort. De Lancey, who was evidently revelling in his independent command, took a fancy to mounting a gun in it and so detailed a sergeant and ten men of the 4/60th Foot to fetch a 6-pdr from an outpost on the other side of the river. All unsuspecting, the party walked straight into an ambush. Some managed to make a run for it and a few others were captured, but most died in the first volley. Their heads and limbs were then hacked off and mounted on sticks *in terrorem*, but then came another bizarre intervention when a party of Iroquois again spoke with the Ohio and Upper Lakes warriors, reminding them that they themselves had ceased participating in the siege of the fort and urging their counterparts to do the same. Thus far, Lignery and Aubry appear to have been ignorant of the earlier conference and were therefore horrified when all but 30 of their erstwhile allies refused to resume the advance. Lignery and Aubry were now on their own.

What was more, the delay meant more precious time was granted for reinforcements to reach De Lancey and his light infantry, huddled in their little fort. First came the three picquets of the day, drawn from the 44th Foot, 46th Foot and New York Regiment and totalling about 150 men, but the fire-eating Massey was close behind with the rest of the 46th Foot. In a 30 July letter to Amherst Massey wrote:

I was reliev'd from the Trenches very late the night before therefore was most Fatigued. My Servant came into my Tent and said he heard Firing on our Left [i.e.

from the direction of the portage road]. I instantly leap'd up while I was dressing I saw a Serjt from the Light Infantry to Sir Wm Johnson that the Enemy was in motion. I then ordered the 46 under Arms & by the time I completed those Men in Ammunition, that had fired it away in ye Trenches, I recd an order from Sir Wm Johnson to march to the support of the Light Infantry and Pickets ... (TNA WO 34/53)

As it happens, with his light company already in action and 50 men more with the picquets, Massey could muster only 164 men of which even his elite grenadier company comprised just 24 men under Captain James Marsh. Notwithstanding the need to replenish their ammunition, Massey had them hurried down to La Belle-Famille within 25 minutes of the alarm, only to find that Lignery and Aubry had not yet advanced out of the trees.



Back at Fort Niagara, meanwhile, hearing the sound of the initial ambush, Pouchot and Bonnafox mounted the southernmost bastion of the fort, where they had a distant view of the proceedings through their telescopes. Unfortunately, it was difficult to be certain what was happening:

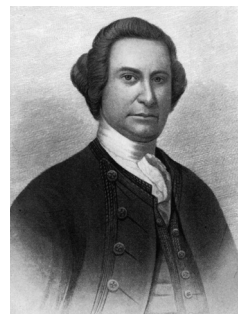
M. Pouchot observed some Englishmen who were fleeing rather hastily towards their main sentry posts and troops who were marching from the position in the centre towards the edge of the cleared ground in order to join them at the entrance of the La Belle-Famille terrain where we could see a little of the back of a retrenchment of abatis. We aimed two cannon towards that point and fired two or three shots. At the same time M. Pouchot observed a few odd Indians with a white flag. (Pouchot 1994: 219)

Pouchot mistakenly took them to be Iroquois and ordered Bonnafox to turn his cannon on them, but in fact it was an attempt to alert him that Lignery and Aubry were about to attack.

By now Massey had deployed the 140 men of the battalion companies of the 46th Foot squarely athwart the portage road, facing due south towards the edge of the woods. Captain Marsh and his grenadiers were deployed a little forward on the right flank, overlooking the low bluff above the river, which was assumed to be infested with Indians, while Captain Richard Baily and the 50 picquets of the 44th Foot took post in the gap between the grenadiers and Massey's battle-line. On the immediate left of the 46th Foot was De Lancey's little fort and then beyond, forming the left flank, were the two remaining picquets. In all, Massey had 464 men under his command besides an unknown number of Iroquois lurking in the woods on his left. Any satisfaction he may have felt at having properly got into position before the French arrived, however, was tempered by the realization that De Lancey and his men were not properly standing in line, and so – according to his 30 July letter to Amherst – Massey immediately 'order'd ye Light Infantry out of a Breast Work which ye Captains grumbled and said it was very severe, but I said aloud would be a scandalous thing for Light Infantry to possess a Breastwork and have a Battalion drawn up on their Right.' It no doubt offended him even more that Captain De Lancey was one of his own officers, for 'notwithstanding this as soon as I went to my post on the Right but ye Light Infantry went into their Breast Work again ...' (TNA WO 34/53).

At this inauspicious moment Massey saw flashes of white in the woods to his front. The French were on the move and so he ordered the front rank of the 46th Foot to fix bayonets and then all to lie down and wait his word of command. Requiring only the first rank to fix bayonets was unusual but not unprecedented, and may have been done at Culloden where Massey served as a subaltern with the Inniskillings – later the 27th Regiment of Foot – in 1746. Bayonets were normally regarded as a liability in a firefight since they hampered swift reloading, but at Culloden the front rank had been ordered to fix and then, having fired their volley, to stand fast against the oncoming Highland clansmen while the other ranks continued loading and firing behind them. The instruction now clearly implied that Massey was anticipating just such a sudden onslaught rather than a stand-up firefight.

He was quite right. Even without taking into account their uncertain allies, Lignery and Aubry outnumbered the British immediately to their front by rather more than two to one, and may have thought the odds were even



Crucial to the British Army's relationship with the Indians on the New York frontier was an Irishman named Sir William Johnson (1715–74). Settling in Upper New York, he gained a great affinity with the local Indians and was first appointed the British agent to the Iroquois; he gained a baronetcy for his role in the British victory at Lake George in 1755 and was appointed Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the northern colonies in the following year. As such he led a substantial number of Indians on the Niagara expedition and talked his way into commanding it after Prideaux was killed. He was present at, if not responsible for, the neutrality agreement which preceded the fight at La Belle-Famille, but while taking the credit for the victory he does not appear to have been present on the field. The original painting on which this lithograph is based depicts him wearing a red coat with red facings and gold lace (and a gold-laced hat) but a blue silk civilian waistcoat.

OPPOSITE A Canadian militiaman, by Derek FitzJames. His equipment – with a *gargousier* or belt-mounted cartridge box and a priming flask suspended from the narrow strap over the left shoulder – was outdated by the 1750s, but may well have been retained on the frontier as being more practical for service in the woods than the larger *giberne* carried on a sling. However, while the *fusilier* was primarily armed with a Charleville-type infantry musket, this *milicien* has one of the popular Tulle hunting muskets. Note the *milicien's* characteristic Breton-style hat and long hair. Many of the colonists originally came from Brittany and traditionally a high proportion of men in the *compagnies franches* were also recruited from the area. (Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection)

better since they did not see the 46th Foot lying down amid the brush. Therefore they resolved on an immediate assault in a column formation 12 deep, and at about 0800hrs the French came straight down the road with white colours at their head. To Pouchot it rather confusedly appeared that:

we saw a unit, all bunched together at the front proceeding in perfect safety along a track 7 to 8 feet wide. It seemed that, upon perceiving the enemy, to whom it was very close, it was trying to draw up in a tight battle formation without ranks or files. On their right appeared about thirty Indians who formed a front facing the left flank of the enemy. This battalion fired off one or two salvoes as it approached the enemy, who seemed to make a forward movement out of their abatis. Having been greeted by a third salvo, they returned to it in great haste. Thereupon the battalion advanced in order to enter the abatis but it was stopped by an enemy volley. They immediately knelt in order to fire into the abatis. (Pouchot 1994: 220)

Pouchot then found his view of the battle obscured by a great quantity of rain, which he reckoned made the combatants' muskets wet. Oddly enough, however, none of the other accounts mention this sudden shower and Massey, standing upright on a log in the midst of the action, saw things a little differently. The French certainly fired more than two or even three volleys and may actually have fired as many as six, wounding Massey in the process. A plan of the battle submitted with Massey's report actually shows the French initially deployed in *two* columns: the larger one on the right was presumably comprised of the four Canadian companies under Lignery, while the smaller one on the left was the two Louisiana companies under Aubrey.

The irascible Massey might have been wounded, but he wasn't incapacitated, and – according to his 30 July letter – as the French came forward 'with a very great noise and shouting' he ordered his men to stand up: 'I gave the word Fire and to do justice I never saw a Grand Division (for such I must call my Number) give so plump a Fire, after firing Standing seven rounds, I gave the word for the whole to advance by constant firing, which was done in great [style?] and ye most of ye 46[th] fird 16 rounds' (TNA WO 34/53). This heavy fire appears to have come as a considerable surprise to the French, for as Massey recounted in a later note they were apparently under orders to squat or throw themselves down 'to let the Heat of our Fire pass, then to rise & push forward' (Pouchot 1994: 221). This was not unusual and the French had, for example, done the same at Dettingen in 1743, but on this occasion at least it proved ineffective due to the 'Loss they sustained & by falling among our Troops before they expected it. They were thrown into Confusion & obliged to retire' (Pouchot 1994: 221). The apparent bunching which Pouchot saw from the fort, nearly 1,000yd away, was probably the immediate response to the unexpected appearance of the 46th Foot, as the French first halted and then tried to deploy into line.

At the same time Captain Marsh and his company of grenadiers, ignoring the threat from below the bluffs, were 'pouring in all their fire on the Enemy's Flanks' and killed 'great numbers' (quoted in Dunnigan 1986: 78). Marsh himself went down wounded and 14 out of his 24 men were also killed or wounded, but nevertheless Massey reckoned their intervention was decisive. Staggered, the Louisiana companies on the left started to fall back while the Canadian companies, having managed to form a hasty battle-line, became

engaged in a firefight with De Lancey's light companies behind their breastwork. De Lancey had ordered his men to hold their fire 'till they were sure of their mark' and then each fired about ten rounds into the French at murderously close range (quoted in Dunnigan 1986: 78). Kneeling amid the litter of an old Iroquois camp, the French attempted to return fire, but with the picquets of the 46th Foot and the New York Regiment firing into their flank, they too soon gave way. It was surprising that they stood so long and the French commander at Fort Chartres, Capitaine Barthélemy Macarty Mactigue – or more properly, perhaps, Bartholomew McCarthy McTeague – afterwards explained to Vaudreil that: 'The majority of the officers perished by the first volley being fired on the front and the flank. The surprise made all those behind turn around, most having not been able to fire being in a 12 rank column when they were routed. It was impossible for the officers who remained to rally their men ...' (quoted in Dunnigan 1986: 78). There were indeed few French officers left to rally their men at this point. Both Lignery and Aubry were wounded, and as Massey led his victorious battle-line forward in pursuit he scooped them up along with several others. This was just as well, for having remained neutral during the fight, the Iroquois suddenly surged out of the woods to kill, scalp and plunder as many of the fugitives as they could come up with.

According to Macarty: 'The loss of the 24 July is estimated at 344 men taken or killed, of which number 17 are officers from Canada and about 200 Canadians or soldiers, 6 officers from Louisiana which are the Srs. Aubry, De Villiers, Lozy, Desroches, DeVins, Ferrant. Cadets Desillets, Labarre, 2 sergeants, 2 corporals, 30 soldiers and 54 habitants [militia]' (quoted in Dunnigan 1986: 105). At least five other officers and a chaplain were killed. British losses, according to a surgeon named Huck, amounted to just 12 killed and 40 wounded. So sudden and so complete was the victory that Pouchot, meanwhile, still watching from the bastion of the fort, thought it had just been a reconnaissance:







La Belle-Famille



British view: Standing on a fallen log in order to see the enemy better as they emerge from the woods, Lieutenant-Colonel Eyre Massey has ordered his 46th Foot to stand up and commence firing into the French to their front. At the same time, Captain James Marsh with the regiment's grenadier company and a picquet of the 44th Foot have also risen from concealment by the riverbank and are enfilading the French left flank at even closer range. The firefight is of brief duration and after his men each pour a dozen rounds into the white-coated mass, Massey

reckons the French are on the point of breaking and orders a methodical advance, probably by alternate platoons, firing as they go. Only the front rank have fixed their bayonets, but the French are already demoralized and soon break and run, pursued by the British forces' Indian allies. In contrast to the French, British casualties are mercifully light, amounting to just 12 killed and 40 wounded, with the latter including Lieutenant-Colonel Massey and Captain Marsh of the grenadiers.



French view: Despite advancing cautiously through the woods, and being only too well aware of the presence of De Lancey's light infantry off to their right, Capitaine de Lignery and his 600–700 French soldiers and militia have been ambushed less than a mile from their objective at Fort Niagara. As they emerge into the clearing at La Belle-Famille at about 0800hrs on 24 July 1759, a weak battalion of British regulars has suddenly risen up from concealment behind a screen of brushwood directly in front of them and commenced firing at close range.

Worse still, as the *compagnies franches de la marine* struggle to deploy from column into line, they are caught in a murderous crossfire as more British infantry concealed on the river bank rise up and begin firing into their left flank. Still encumbered by wearing their full marching order, the French struggle to return fire, and some of them kneel to shoot low into the brush. However, Lignery and other officers are already going down and within minutes they will all break and run, losing 344 officers and men killed wounded or captured.

Eyre Massey

Eyre Massey had a very typical military career. Born in 1719, the sixth son of Colonel Hugh Massey of Duntrileague, County Limerick, he entered the army as an ensign in 1739 at the age of 19, served at Culloden in 1746 as captain-lieutenant of the 27th (Inniskilling) Regiment of Foot, was promoted to captain on 24 May 1751 and major by brevet on 10 December 1755. He then transferred to the 46th Foot in 1757 and became lieutenant-colonel in 1758. He had therefore served 20 years in the Army and was by any standards a thoroughly professional soldier when he found himself in command of the regular forces at La Belle-Famille, although in

terms of numbers his force equated to no more than the single battalion which his ordinary regimental rank entitled and required him to lead. Standing on a fallen tree in full view of all the combatants he was, not surprisingly, shot and wounded. The nature of the wound is not recorded, but it was not disabling. His reward for the victory was to be transferred back to the 27th Foot and he led them during the last year of the war. He then became colonel of the 27th Foot in 1777 but otherwise saw out his career in a succession of administrative posts before dying as a full general on 17 May 1804.

But from the lack of musket fire that we heard, we estimated that the entire [French] battalion had withdrawn. It was in our eyes so small that through the rain we judged that it might have been M. Marin or some other officer who had come up to reconnoitre the enemy & had pushed forward as far as the abatis. (Pouchot 1994: 221)

Uncertain as to what was happening, Pouchot was also at first inclined to stay put, but ‘a sergeant in the covered way estimated from the silence of the trench that it was unmanned and asked M. Pouchot if he could make a sortie’ (Pouchot 1994: 221). In fact, having sent off the picquets of the day and then Massey with the 46th Foot, Johnson was very much alive to the possibility that Pouchot might attack. While Major John Beckwith of the 44th Foot was given command of the troops in the trenches, Lieutenant-Colonel William Farquhar was posted at the tail of the sap, to support him with the grenadiers of the 44th Foot and 4/60th Foot. Thus as soon as ‘the English saw men

Pierre Pouchot

Pierre Pouchot, or Pouchot de Maupas, was born in Grénoble, France in 1712. Seemingly the son of a merchant, he entered the French Army as a volunteer in 1733 and obtained a commission as *lieutenant en second* in the Régiment de Béarn on 1 May 1734. Service in Italy followed, but although a reduction in the regiment’s establishment saw him forced to accept an appointment as *enseigne*, he was again promoted to *lieutenant* in 1739 and was then to become *lieutenant* of the colonel’s company in 1742. A brevet promotion to *capitaine* followed in 1745 and he finally obtained his company in 1749. Thereafter his career stalled. As a *roturier* or commoner, he could go no further, and recommendations for a brevet commission as *lieutenant colonel* fell on deaf ears. Nevertheless, his experience and talents – he was a competent if

self-taught military engineer – saw him employed in a variety of appointments more suited to an officer of superior rank. At La Belle-Famille he was no more than an interested but helpless spectator of a fight that ended hopes of relief and compelled his surrender next day. Notwithstanding, he was still held in high regard and after being exchanged was assigned to command another post at Fort Lévis since – according to Vaudreuil – ‘he combined within himself the qualities of a good Engineer, and had acquired experience in managing the Indian Nations’ (quoted in Pouchot 1994: 22). He also got on well with the Canadian officers; but the end of the Canadian war effectively saw the end of his career, although he accepted a staff appointment as an engineer in Corsica, only to be killed in action there on 8 May 1769.

This painting by Benjamin West is traditionally said to depict Sir William Johnson saving the life of the French commander, Baron Dieskau, at the battle of Lake George in September 1755. However, the wounded officer wears the uniform of the *compagnies franches de la marine* and Fort Niagara can be seen in the background. The painting may have been intended to bolster Johnson's claim to have won the battle at La Belle-Famille, but it does raise the intriguing possibility that he was indeed present with his Mohawks rather than at the main camp. Of more interest are the two indifferent light infantrymen wearing caps and cut-down coats. Both they and Johnson are also wearing blue frieze leggings in place of more conventional gaiters. (Public Domain)



bestraddling the palisades, their entire trench immediately appeared filled with men naked to the waist & there were companies of grenadiers at the head of the trenches. We fired several volleys at them with our cannon, which made them return to cover, and our sortie did not take place' (Pouchot 1994: 221).

That same afternoon, Johnson beat for a parley, and by 2200hrs the articles of capitulation had been signed. At 0700hrs on 25 July Lieutenant-Colonel Farquhar led the grenadier companies of the 44th Foot, 46th Foot and 4/60th Foot up to the fort and secured the gate, no doubt by the time-honoured manner of relieving the French guard in due form. Fort Niagara was now British and remained so until handed over to the United States in 1796.

For the French, the capitulation guaranteed good treatment for their wounded and proper protection and accommodation for all prisoners until they could be exchanged – but this only applied to those prisoners who had surrendered to or been captured by British forces. A number of French officers captured by the Iroquois at La Belle-Famille were ransomed, but the rank-and-file prisoners were left to their fate. Curiously, two of Captain De Lancey's light infantry captured in the ambush at the outset of the action were released in September, and a third, an artilleryman, turned up the following April.

Plains of Abraham

13 September 1759

BACKGROUND TO BATTLE

In contrast to the near-intimacy of the scrambling affair in the clearing at La Belle-Famille outside Niagara, the September encounter on the Plains of Abraham outside Québec was a full-scale battle involving a total of over 7,000 men and pitting seven French regular battalions against 11 British ones on an open field. Indeed, as at least one participant remarked, it was probably the first battle in North America in which two European armies actually manoeuvred and fought against each other in such a formal manner. Nevertheless, it was also very much a North American battle in that both armies had first to travel great distances, and very largely by boat rather than marching overland, in order to reach the battlefield.

Ultimately, the British jumping-off point was the Atlantic fortress of Louisbourg, on the Île Royale near the mouth of the Saint Lawrence River. It had been captured from the French the year before and here some 7,000 men belonging to ten regular battalions and a provisional battalion of grenadiers borrowed from the Louisbourg garrison, together with three companies of the Royal Artillery, a battalion of New England rangers, and another of pioneers, all embarked on a fleet of 141 warships and transports with a 700-mile voyage up the Saint Lawrence ahead of them. It took exactly three weeks and saw the first troops set ashore on 28 June on the Île d'Orléans, just 4 miles across the water from Québec. The magnitude of the undertaking may be gauged by the



Personnel of the 43rd Foot, easily identified by their white facings, are depicted in camp during the 1750s in this modern work by the Canadian artist Lewis Parker. (Courtesy Fort Beauséjour National Historic Park, Parks Canada; photo René Chartrand)

fact that the distance is slightly greater than that between Berlin and Paris, and it had been accomplished without fighting and without the inevitable wastage in men and *matériel* (not least boot leather) of a land campaign.

The French defenders, for their part had a slightly similar experience, albeit on a much smaller scale. The experience of the Régiment de Guyenne was fairly typical. Having spent the winter in the Montréal area, a detachment was sent off to Niagara with Capitaine Pouchot on 27 March while in May the rest of the regiment went north to Québec, a distance of nearly 170 miles. It is possible that they and the other regiments with them marched overland, but rather more likely that like their British counterparts they travelled by water, albeit aboard *bateaux* rather than transports. In either event, they too arrived in good time and in good condition, and were set to constructing field fortifications at Beauport, just to the east of the city, which were intended to frustrate a British landing there. In this they were successful. An amphibious assault by the British on 31 July was beaten off with 210 killed and 230 wounded, and to all intents and purposes Wolfe then spent over two fruitless months trying to find a way to attack the French.

In general terms the British held the right or south bank of the Saint Lawrence River, while the city of Québec and its defenders occupied the left bank. The Royal Navy's control of the river itself meant that British troops could be and were shifted up and down almost at will, while their French counterparts had to march – a factor which figured strongly in Wolfe's final plan. Ironically, that plan had originated in a different form with Wolfe's

brigadiers while he lay ill. Their plan required the army to be shipped some miles upstream and there put ashore on the left bank in order to interdict the French line of communications, thus forcing the French commander, the Marquis de Montcalm, to come out of his fortifications and fight them on their own terms. Accordingly, after detailing 600 men of the 2/60th Foot and a Marine battalion to guard the base camp on the Île d'Orléans, and the 48th Foot from Monckton's First Brigade to guard the artillery, the army was concentrated at Gorham's Post, an observation post directly opposite the city, on 6 September. Lieutenant John Knox of the 43rd Foot remembered it as a showery day, with the wind variable:

In the evening we arrived at Goreham's post, where we lay on our arms until boats should arrive. At night-fall we forded the river Etchemin, about fifty yards over, a stony and uneven bottom, and very slippery, with a rapid current; fortunately the waters were fallen, for we were not above mid-thigh ... our situation in fording was rendered disagreeable by a battery which the enemy have at Sillery, opposite to the mouth of this rivulet, whence they cannonaded us as we passed; but luckily their shot was either over or short of us: on the west side stood a straggling village, which terminated in a point and formed a cove, where boats were ready to receive us and conduct the regiments to their respective ships. The forty-third regiment was particularly fortunate, being put aboard the *Seahorse* frigate, where Captain Smith and his officers entertained us in a most princely manner, and very obligingly made it their principal care to render our crowded situation as agreeable as possible. (Knox 1914: 2.74–75)

HMS *Seahorse* was a relatively new sixth-rate ship of 25 guns, completed in 1749, with a crew of 160 officers and men. With an additional 304 officers and men of the 43rd Foot embarked she must have been very crowded indeed. The regiment's situation remained crowded for some time.

Next morning the ships moved upriver to Cap-Rouge, shadowed by a French mobile column under Colonel de Bougainville, intent on preventing just such a landing. Five days of frustration and discomfort followed as the generals gradually worked towards a solution amid prolonged heavy rain which effectively curtailed any thought of military action. The *Seahorse* was soon required elsewhere and so on 9 September Knox and the rest of the 43rd Foot found themselves removed to the curiously named *Employment* transport, which was already packed with the army's provisions, while a number of other units were set ashore on the right bank and cantoned in the village of Saint-Nicolas.

Wolfe was in any case unhappy with the brigadiers' plan, since there was no certainty of the French being so obliging as to fight the British in the open at a distance from the city; he looked for a much closer landing place and found it in l'Anse-au-Foulon, just a very short

A present-day view of the cliff above what would have been the beach in September 1759, just below the Foulon at the point where the British light infantry came ashore and climbed straight up. Other units, including the 43rd Foot, followed suit rather than queue for the Foulon road; this image provides both a clear view of the height of the slope and, by means of the shadows, a pretty good impression of the actual profile.



This 1903 work by US artist Frank Otis Small depicts the British ascent of the slope as a heroic feat of mountaineering. Once the hilltop was secured it was possible to use the road instead. Capitaine La Pause of the Régiment de Guyenne described it as 'a path on which two men can descend abreast' and Hervey Smyth confirms that 'the remainder of the Army came up' by it (quoted in Stacey 1973: 128, 133). (Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection via René Chartrand)



OPPOSITE A French *colonel* of infantry as depicted by Baudouin and identified by the fringe of white ostrich feathers in his cocked hat. At the battle on 13 September the Régiment de Guyenne was commanded by Lieutenant colonel Louis Restoineau, le Sieur de Fontbonne. Given the French Army's ready access to horses it is possible that de Fontbonne was mounted and wearing boots rather than the gaiters depicted here, but at all events he is most unlikely to have carried the espontoon or half-pike illustrated here. In any case, he was shot and killed leading the regiment forward in its doomed charge.

distance upstream from Québec itself. On 11 September 'he sent for an officer and thirty men of the forty-third regiment to escort him on a reconnoitre, with Brigadier Townshend, the chief engineer, Colonel Carleton, etc. For this purpose six of our grenadiers' coats were also sent for by his excellency's order' (Knox 1914: 2.84–85). From Gorham's post he pointed out the essential features. The bluff on which Québec was located was about 180ft high at this point, but there was a narrow roadway running up from the Foulon which if seized would allow the army not only to get ashore but up on to the Plains of Abraham above.

Thus encouraged, Wolfe drafted his orders. In all, a total of six flat-bottomed boats were to take 50 men each of the 28th Foot out of the *Ann & Elizabeth* transport; four boats belonging to HMS *Pembroke* were to receive Lieutenant John Knox and the 43rd Foot out of the *Employment* transport; eight boats were

to take the light infantry from the *Jane & Mary*; six were required for the 58th Foot, while five more were to take the 47th Foot, and one other was to take 50 grenadiers of the 60th Foot. A further 150 Highlanders were to be parcelled out in longboats and cutters and 50 more aboard a little schooner whimsically named the *Terror of France*. The rest of the army was to follow in the ships. And so, as Lieutenant Knox recorded in his journal:

At nine o'clock this night, our army in high spirits, the first division of them put into the flat-bottomed boats and, a short time after, the whole squadron moved up the river with the tide of flood and, about an hour before day-light next morning, we fell down with the ebb. Weather favourable, a star-light night.

Before day-break on the 13th we made a descent upon the shore, about a quarter of a mile to the eastward of Sillery; and the light troops were fortunately, by the rapidity of the current, carried lower down, between us and Cape Diamond ... The chain of sentries which they had posted along the summit of the heights, galled us a little and picked off several men and some officers before our light infantry got up to dislodge them. (Knox 1914: 2.94–96)

It was indeed fortunate that the light infantry under Lieutenant-Colonel William Howe had been carried further down the river than had been intended, for the road slashing diagonally across the face of the bluff was blocked by an abatis – a barricade formed of brush and trees like a barbed-wire entanglement – and covered by a picquet at the top. Finding that he had missed the bottom of the road, Howe decided that rather than double back along the beach he should send his light infantry straight up the slope where he was. (Notwithstanding generations of heroic illustrations by artists such as Frank Otis Small depicting an alpine cliff, the ascent is by no means as steep or as high as legend allows, and although the slope is covered in a fine shale scree there were and still are trees, roots and scrub aplenty to provide handholds. The author, then in his mid-50s, made it to the top in just over ten minutes.)



The 43rd Foot and the Régiment de Guyenne on the Plains of Abraham, 13 September 1759

- 1 0430hrs:** The British first wave, including the 43rd Foot, lands from boats at l'Anse-au-Foulon below the Plains while the light infantry scramble up the slope to deal with the French picquet at the top of the Foulon road.
- 2 0600hrs:** Light infantry clear the French outpost from the top of the Foulon road then turn west to deal with a battery (off the map to the west). Meanwhile, the other four first-wave battalions move directly up the slope and form with their backs to the river.
- 3 0700hrs:** The four battalions face to the right and march by files along the Foulon road to form a battle-line on the Plains, facing towards Québec. At this stage the Louisbourg Grenadiers are on the right, then the 28th Foot, 43rd Foot and 47th Foot. In the meantime the British second wave and artillery are landing and coming up the Foulon road.
- 4 0700hrs:** The Régiment de Guyenne arrives and takes up a position on the Buttes à Neveu.
- 5 0730hrs:** French skirmishers close around the flanks and lurk in the cornfields in front of the British battle-line.
- 6 0800hrs:** The remainder of the British forces arrive and the army is eventually deployed in a horseshoe formation with the front line extended on the left by the 78th Highlanders and 58th Foot, with the 3/60th Foot and 2/60th Foot forming beside the 15th Foot at the northern end of the line. The 48th Foot is left in reserve but spread very thinly by companies. Canadian militia in the bushes continues to prove troublesome.
- 7 0800hrs:** The French army begins to arrive regiment by regiment and over the next hour forms a battle-line along the Buttes à Neveu with the Régiment de Guyenne and Régiment de Béarn deployed in column in the centre.
- 8 1000hrs:** The French assault forward to within 45yd of the British line before breaking.

Battlefield environment

The battlefield on the Plains was generally open but very uneven, especially towards the river where there is a deep depression in front of the Buttes à Neveu. Most of it was cultivated, with standing corn providing good cover for the French and Canadian skirmishers. However, at least one French account mentions that some of these cornfields were fenced, which must have hampered Montcalm's advance.

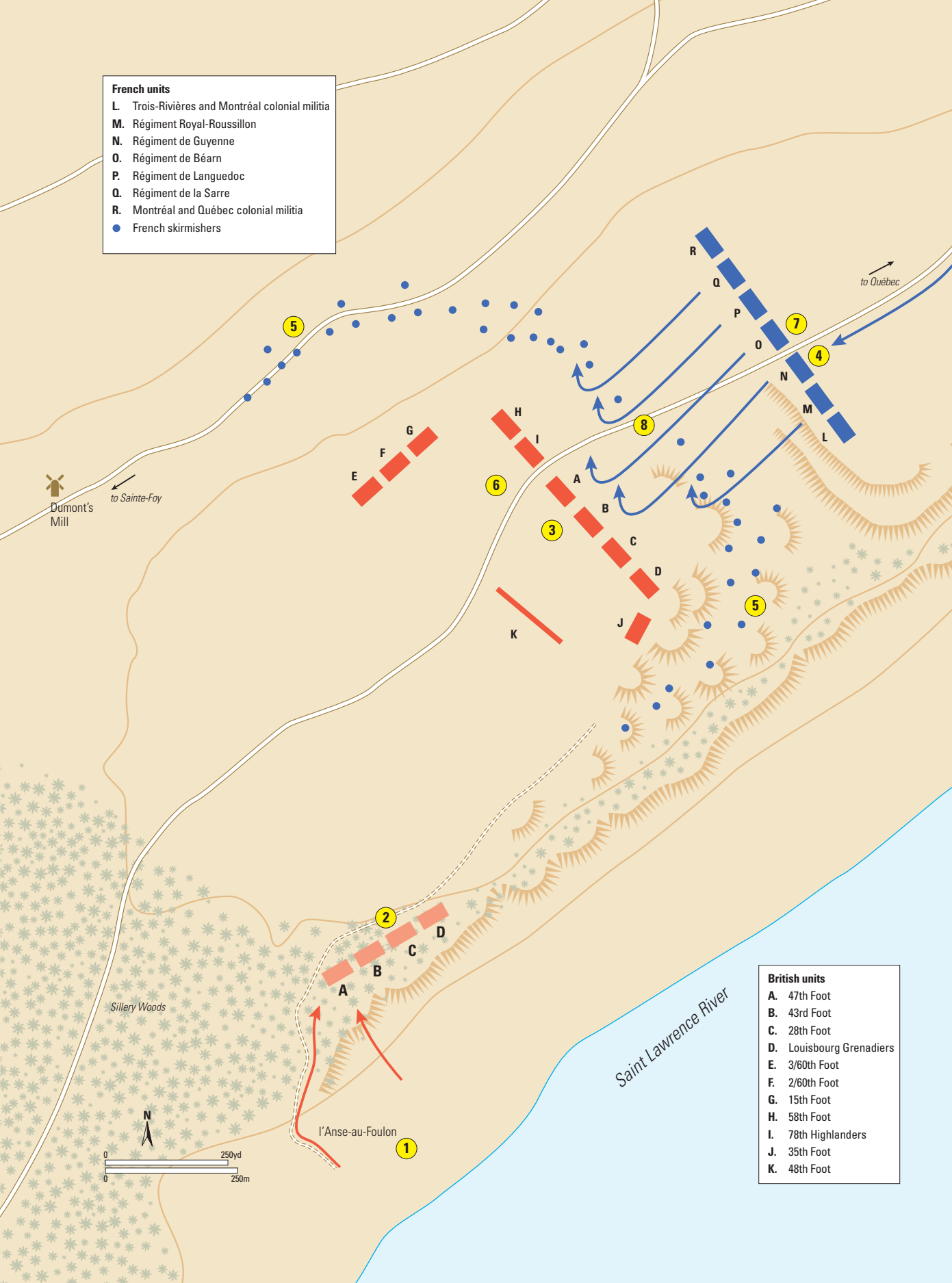
The battlefield has long since been destroyed by intensive urban development. Only the roads now remain, together with a relatively narrow strip of land between the rear of the present Grande Allée and the river, which is to all intents and purposes a municipal park and rather different in character from the scrubland and cornfields fought over in 1759.

A View of the taking of Quebec; September 13th 1759, one of a series of patriotic prints depicting British victories published in London by John Bowles and Carrington Bowles in 1795. Like other prints, this provides a slightly confused picture of the battle by depicting a variety of events simultaneously and skewing geography. It does, however, stress how the Plains of Abraham were at a higher level, and shows most British troops ascending by the Foulon road. Less happily, perhaps, it provides an exaggerated view of the steepness of the slope above the river. While that part of the slope immediately above the disembarking troops is not too inaccurate, later artists – and perhaps not a few writers – have been unduly influenced by the almost alpine cliff face beyond. (Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection)



French units

- L.** Trois-Rivières and Montréal colonial militia
- M.** Régiment Royal-Roussillon
- N.** Régiment de Guyenne
- O.** Régiment de Béarn
- P.** Régiment de Languedoc
- Q.** Régiment de la Sarre
- R.** Montréal and Québec colonial militia
- French skirmishers



British units

- A.** 47th Foot
- B.** 43rd Foot
- C.** 28th Foot
- D.** Louisbourg Grenadiers
- E.** 3/60th Foot
- F.** 2/60th Foot
- G.** 15th Foot
- H.** 58th Foot
- I.** 78th Highlanders
- J.** 35th Foot
- K.** 48th Foot



The 43rd Foot formed part of Brigadier-General Robert Monckton's brigade. Monckton (1726–82) was a well-connected former Guards officer with surprisingly considerable experience of warfare in North America. He was also colonel of the 47th Foot and in deference to his experience was appointed Wolfe's second-in-command. Alas he, too, was wounded on the Plains of Abraham, taking a bullet in the chest. The wound was not fatal but it incapacitated him at a critical moment in the battle, leaving the British Army leaderless until Brigadier-General Townshend could be found, and rather to Monckton's resentment preventing his subsequently accepting the surrender of Québec. Evacuated to New York, he recovered to be assigned the task of consolidating British gains around Niagara and Detroit, and subsequently enjoyed considerable success in the West Indies. (Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection)

INTO COMBAT

Once at the top of the slope the British chased off the French picquet in very short order. What is not clear at this point is whether the rest of the army then hurried up the road, or whether some units, profiting by the example of the light infantry, went straight up, as Knox's account suggests in relating of the 43rd that: 'We lost no time here, but clambered up one of the steepest precipices that can be conceived being almost a perpendicular and of an incredible height' (Knox 1914: 2.96).

By about 0600hrs on 13 September the first wave was ashore and soon formed on the top of the bluff, facing north in order to cover the landing of the second wave, which had come down the river on board the transports. This took about two hours to accomplish, but once completed Wolfe redeployed his army facing more or less eastwards towards the city while two additional battalions were brought directly across the river from the camp at Pointe-Lévy. Then, at about 0800hrs the army moved forward to establish its battle-line on a slightly rising ground among some cornfields, with its right flank more or less firmly anchored on a prominent knoll. In reality, neither flank was secure. Canadians and Indian skirmishers appeared in increasing numbers in the standing corn to the front and along the Sainte-Foy road to the north, while others infiltrated the scrub and trees on the slopes below the British left.

Very sensibly, according to Corporal Johnson of the 58th Foot, 'General Wolfe seeing no appearance of the Enemy's being in Motion, he ordered us to lye flat on the Ground on our Arms; and which we did, for a considerable time before we perceived the Enemy to make any considerable advance to us from Beauport' (quoted in Doughty & Parmalee 1901 5: 102). Because both his flanks were in the air Wolfe found it necessary to 'refuse' them; that is, a number of units were deployed facing outwards which meant that his actual battle-line comprised only six battalions totalling 1,505 rank and file. From right to left were the Louisbourg Grenadiers, 28th Foot, 43rd Foot, 47th Foot, 78th Highlanders and 58th Foot, with the 35th Foot facing outwards to cover the right wing, while the 15th Foot and both battalions of the 60th Foot faced the Sainte-Foy road on the left; the strong 48th Foot was in reserve and the light infantry covered the rear.

The army's morning state (TNA CO 5/51 f102) credits the 43rd Foot, posted slightly right of centre, with six captains, six lieutenants (including John Knox), five ensigns, 19 sergeants, 11 drummers and 256 rank and file under Major Robert Elliot; however, about 50 of those were actually serving with the light infantry, leaving only slightly over 200 men in the firing line.

Directly opposite them on a low ridge known as the Buttes à Neveu was the Régiment de Guyenne. According to the engineer, Patrick MacKellar, that morning a detachment had appeared 'upon a rising ground at some little distance above us, but finding they were too late they retired without making any attempt. By some accounts we had afterwards the whole battalion was to have come upon this ground the night before, but by some lucky incident deferred it' (quoted in Doughty & Parmalee 1901 5: 50–51). In fact the regiment was serving as the general reserve battalion and was indeed intended to encamp on the Plains, presumably in readiness to reinforce Bougainville's force if need be. Instead they were stayed by rumours of what turned out to

only be a noisy demonstration against Beauport by the Royal Navy. An opportunity to frustrate Wolfe's lodgement on the Plains was thus lost and instead it took some time for the mistake to be rectified. At 0545hrs, however, a warning was sent to Vaudreuil, the Royal Governor, that the British had landed and that the Régiment de Guyenne 'cannot make too much haste' (quoted in Stacey 1973: 138). As it happens, a staff officer named Montreuil was also alerted about this time and promptly sent two picquets on their way while the remainder were hurriedly assembled and followed at about 0700hrs.

The regiment was still holding the Buttes à Neveu when Montcalm arrived about an hour later and deployed his battle-line along the crest. There is, unfortunately, no surviving French equivalent for the Morning State enumerating the number of men present and fit for duty in the British units, but appended to General Townshend's report is a fairly detailed estimate (TNA CO 5/51 f101). On the left wing, opposite the Louisbourg Grenadiers, was a colonial battalion comprising *compagnies franches de la marine* and militiamen from Montréal and Trois-Rivières (320), and the Régiment Royal-Roussillon (230), then the Régiment de Guyenne (200), Régiment de Béarn (200), Régiment de Languedoc (320) and Régiment de la Sarre (340), and finally another colonial battalion which included men from Montréal and Québec (350). There was no reserve, but there were reckoned to be something in the region of 1,500 irregular skirmishers scattered among the bushes, and the return of Bougainville's force from Cap-Rouge was anxiously awaited.

Exactly where Townshend got these numbers from is not known, but by looking at the experience of the Régiment de Guyenne they would appear to be very close to the truth. According to Montcalm, in a letter to the Chevalier de Lévis dated 1 July 1759, the regiment had comprised 436 officers and men at the outset of the campaign. It is unclear whether this included the picquet already detached to serve under Capitaine Pouchot at Niagara, but on 6 August a second picquet together with the regiment's grenadier company was assigned to the mobile force on the upper river under Bougainville. Then just three days later, on receiving news of the capture of Fort Niagara, Montcalm felt obliged to despatch another 800 men under Lévis to cover any possible British advance from that quarter and so Guyenne was milked of a third picquet. In total these various detachments from the regiment may have amounted to about 200 officers and men, reducing the theoretical number left in the ranks to something well under 300 men, without taking into account the ordinary wastage in men between May and September. Just how severe this was we do not know, but by any standard and even allowing for the expedient of drafting militia into the ranks, Guyenne was severely understrength and probably not too far adrift of mustering the 200 regulars cited by Townshend as present that morning.

The British Army changed its bayonet technique literally in mid-campaign. Prior to 1759 the front rank was required to make a half-turn to the right and level the musket and bayonet breast-high after the manner of 17th-century pike drill. However, on 15 July the 43rd Foot was reviewed and at the conclusion of the firings a sergeant from another unit was ordered to the front 'to shew our men a new method of pushing bayonets ... "The left hand under the swell below the lowermost rammer-pipe, and the right hand across the brass at the extremity of the butt." Thus was the firelock secured, which he poked out before him in like manner as an indolent hay-maker turns hay with a forked pole' (Knox 1914: 1.422). The 43rd Foot were unimpressed but it is illustrated in the *Norfolk Discipline*, which itself was derived from that of Wolfe's 67th Foot and ultimately from French practice.





Montcalm rallying his troops before leading them to disaster at the Plains of Abraham, by Charles William Jefferys. The uniforms worn by the infantrymen appear to be intended to represent the Régiment Royal-Roussillon, but the blue colours are those of the metropolitan Régiment de la Marine with the addition of a powdering of *fleur de lis*. This unit, although similarly dressed, had no connection with the *compagnies franches de la marine*, and did not serve in North America. (René Chartrand)

de Béarn on its right, was drawn up in column formation as a *force de frappe* or shock force. This was entirely in accordance with the 1755 *Instruction*, which required that a column of attack was always to be made using two battalions side-by-side, and six ranks deep. It is probably also significant that both Guyenne and Béarn were of the same size, and were the two weakest French battalions on the field. Montcalm may therefore have selected them as his *force de frappe* precisely because they were too weak to serve effectively in the firing line, but yet good enough for one gallant rush which might break the British line. At any rate, as an unknown French staff officer recorded, Montcalm resolved to try it. ‘The two armies’, the staff officer said,

did not long remain in View of each other, without coming into Action; our Troops shewed great Eagerness to engage, and Intrepidity, but kept it up a very little Time only; it was judged proper to take immediate advantage of this Spirit; however it would have been more prudent to have awaited the arrival of Monsieur De Bougainville, who was advancing with the Flower of the Army; but our Generals thought they could do the business without him, and so marched up to the Enemy. (Quoted in Dougherty & Parmalee 1901 4: 54–56)

Although unequal in size, the French battle-line comprised three brigades; two of them formed in line on either side of the *force de frappe* to provide it with supporting fire. As soon as they went forward, however, it began to come adrift. ‘We had not gone twenty paces,’ lamented another French staff officer named Malartic, ‘when the left was too far in rear and the centre too far in

By an odd coincidence, therefore, the regiment may have been about equal in number to the 200-odd men of the 43rd Foot standing directly opposite.

The formations adopted by the two regiments were, however, quite different. According to a well-known account by Corporal Johnson of the 58th Foot, the British firing line at Québec was only two deep and in open order. This is deceptive, however, for it is clear from a variety of sources that the other British battalions at Québec were conventionally deployed in three ranks, including the 43rd Foot, who were therefore drawn up on a front of just 81 men. (See the important discussion of this in Chapman & Goodman 2014; there is no reason to doubt that Johnson was correct – but only in relation to his own 58th Foot on the left of the main battle-line.)

Most of the French battalions were also drawn up in three ranks that morning, but the Régiment de Guyenne on the other hand, together with the Régiment

John Knox

While generally referred to by historians as Captain Knox, he was still a lieutenant when he served in Canada with the 43rd Foot. Although his date of birth is unknown, he came from County Sligo and entered the British Army as a volunteer in the 1740s, serving in Flanders. In consequence of his good conduct at the battle of Lauffeld in July 1747 he was given a free vacancy as an ensign in the 43rd Foot in 1749, and then managed five years later to scrape together the 'difference' of £100 to purchase a lieutenancy in the same regiment. He then served throughout the Canadian campaigns as second-in-command of his company,

first at Annapolis Royal, then Louisbourg, the Québec expedition, Sainte-Foy and eventually the surrender at Montréal. Unable to raise the £1,000 'difference' to purchase a captaincy within his regiment, he managed to secure a free vacancy as captain of an Independent company in England, only to be placed on half-pay at the war's end. In 1775 he obtained command of a company of Invalids at Berwick-upon-Tweed, but – embittered by long service ill-rewarded – he became embroiled in petty bickering with both his superiors and subordinates and died there on 4 February 1778, leaving his widow with an income of just £26 a year.

front' (quoted in Stacey 1973: 150). Another officer, probably belonging to one of the *compagnies franches de la marine*, confirmed this:

The eminence on which our army was ranged in the order of battle commanded, at some points, that occupied by the English where they were defended either by shallow ravines or by the rail fences of the fields; our troops, composed almost entirely of Canadians impetuously rushed on the enemy, but their ill-formed ranks soon broke, either in consequence of the precipitancy with which they had been made to march, or by the inequality of the ground. (Quoted in Dougherty & Parmalee 1901 3: 164–65)

Others, such as Pouchot and Malartic, were also quick to blame this confusion on the presence of untrained Canadian militiamen in the ranks, the latter stating: 'the Canadians who formed the second rank and the soldiers of the third fired without orders, and according to their custom threw themselves on

James Johnstone

Born in Edinburgh in 1719, Johnstone was the rather wayward son of a well-connected merchant, originally from the Moffat area. In 1745 he joined the Jacobite Army, first as an aide-de-camp to one of the rebel leaders, Lord George Murray and then for a time as a captain and company commander before reverting to staff duties. Escaping from Scotland afterwards he eventually obtained an appointment as an *enseigne* in the *compagnies franches de la marine* and joined the garrison of Louisbourg in 1750. In 1752 he obtained an appointment as an interpreter and in 1754 was promoted to *lieutenant*. Taken on by Lévis as an aide-de-camp in 1758, he then joined Montcalm's staff in the following year and after the fall of Québec rejoined Lévis and served at Sainte-Foy. Following the surrender of Montréal, he was allowed to return to France and there

retired from the Marine service. His military services were comparatively minor, but as a staff officer he had considerable freedom of movement which allowed him to see much more than line officers. His greatest talent, however, was a keen ability to escape from danger; he avoided being penned up in the doomed garrisons of Carlisle and Louisbourg just before they were besieged, and secured a good horse on which to escape from the lost battles of Culloden and the Plains of Abraham. The last record of him was a successful application for a grant of 500 livres from the French government in 1791, but thereafter he vanishes from history. He may well have died in Paris, but given the increasing turmoil in France and his propensity for avoiding disaster, he may well have returned to die in obscurity in Scotland.

the ground to reload. This false movement broke all the battalions' (quoted in Stacey 1973: 150). Whatever the truth of the matter, the immediate effect was to rob Guyenne and Béarn of the fire support they so desperately needed. Presciently too, and perhaps as long ago as December 1755, the then-Lieutenant-Colonel Wolfe had devised a patent method for demolishing French attacks in column:

If the center of the battalion is attacked by a column, the wings must be extremely careful to fire obliquely. That part of the battalion against which the column marches, must reserve their fire, and if they have time to put two of three bullets in their pieces, it must be done. When the column is within about twenty yards they must fire with a good aim, which will necessarily stop them a little. (Wolfe 1780: 52)

As John Knox recounted, that was exactly what now happened as the Régiment de Guyenne bore down upon the 43rd Foot:

About ten o'clock the enemy began to advance briskly in three columns, with loud shouts and recovered arms, two of them inclining to the left of our army, and the third towards our right, firing obliquely at the two extremities of our line, from the distance on one hundred and thirty, until they came within forty yards; which our troops withstood with the greatest intrepidity and firmness, still reserving their fire and paying the strictest obedience to their officers: this uncommon steadiness, together with the havoc which the grape-shot from our field-pieces made among them, threw them into some disorder, and was most critically maintained by a well-timed, regular and heavy discharge of our small arms, such as they could no longer oppose.

When the general formed the line of battle, he ordered the regiments to load with an additional ball. The forty-third and forty-seventh regiments, in the center, being little affected by the oblique fire of the enemy, gave them, with great calmness, as remarkable a close and heavy discharge as I ever saw performed at a private field of exercise, insomuch that better troops than we encountered could not possibly withstand it: indeed well might the French officers say that they never opposed such a shock as they received from the center of our line, for that they believed every ball took place, and such regularity and discipline they had not experienced before; our troops in general, and particularly the central corps, having levelled and fired – *comme un coup de canon*. (Knox 1914: 2.100–01)

Again, there is controversy among historians as to whether a single general discharge finished the business, or whether the British infantry fired by platoons either in the old manner or in the newly introduced Alternate Fire. However, given Wolfe's instructions on receiving column attacks, there is no reason to doubt that the 43rd Foot at least did indeed deliver a single volley like a cannon-shot – and it did very decidedly 'stop' the Régiment de Guyenne dead in its tracks. While it was obviously an exaggeration to say that every ball found a target, the result of that single volley was just as murderous as that equally close-range fire delivered by Massey and his 46th Foot at La Belle-Famille. The battalion's 54-year-old commanding officer, Lieutenant colonel Louis Restoineau, le Sieur de Fontbonne, was killed outright, as were Capitaine Cornier, Capitaine de Grave, Lieutenant Restaurand, Lieutenant

Dupont, Lieutenant Fouquet and at least 23 soldiers. In addition, Capitaine Darlens, Capitaine Chambeau, Capitaine d'Artigues and Capitaine Bousquet were wounded along with Lieutenant Toyon, Lieutenant Chabert and a further 64 men. Aside from the fact of so many officers being killed and wounded, well over one-third of the rank and file had fallen in a matter of seconds.

In very marked contrast to this horror, the 43rd Foot afterwards returned just three men killed, and Ensign Lewis Jones, two sergeants and 18 privates wounded, and two missing – and even then not all of them were hit in that brief spasm of violence which decided the action. Knox asserts that 'In the boat where I was, one man was killed; one seaman, with four soldiers, were slightly, and two mortally' (Knox 1914: 2.96). That alone is sufficient to account for the three dead and there may well have been others wounded in different boats. Little wonder, then, that a French officer should lament that 'Our Troops gave the first Fire, and those of the English the second, and the Affair was over; our Right took their Heels, our Center ran away after them, and drew along the Left, and so the Battle was lost in less Time than I am telling the Story' (quoted in Doughty & Parmalee 1901 4: 254–56). Lieutenant John Knox for his part agreed and summed up what followed:

Hereupon they gave way, and fled with precipitation, so that, by the time the cloud of smoke was vanished, our men were again loaded and, profiting by the advantage we had over them, pursued them almost to the gates of the town and the bridge over the little river, redoubling our fire with great eagerness, making many officers and men prisoners. (Knox 1914: 2.101)

Amid the confusion resulting from the death of Wolfe and the wounding of his second-in-command, Brigadier-General Monckton, the survivors of the Régiment de Guyenne and the rest of the French army escaped from the battlefield. Montcalm, too, had been hit and as he lay dying the decision was taken to abandon the camp and swing around the battlefield to join with Bougainville's force. That also meant abandoning Québec and in it a garrison hastily formed by drawing yet another picquet from Guyenne and the other regular regiments. On 18 September the city surrendered and with it Capitaine Bigat and his 37 men as well as the regiment's wounded in the hospital.



Montcalm, despite being mounted on a big black charger, came through the furious storm of British musketry unscathed only to be wounded by two or three rounds of grapeshot from one of the British cannon he rode from the field. Escorted back into the city by some of his men as depicted here by Louis Bombled, he lingered until the early hours of the following morning. As to his escort, the blue cuffs and lapels of the soldier on the right identify him as a *fusilier* of the Régiment de Languedoc, but the others are unclear and their equipment looks German rather than French. (René Chartrand)

Sainte-Foy

28 April 1760

Major général François de Gaston, Chevalier de Lévis (1719–87), accompanied Montcalm to Canada as his second-in-command, but unlike the latter worked hard to cultivate good relations with Vaudreuil. After the fall of Québec, Lévis displayed considerable energy and determination in rebuilding the shattered army and unlike his predecessor was notably successful in integrating metropolitan and Canadian units properly and employing their different capabilities to best advantage. (Musée Château de Ramezay, Montréal; photo René Chartrand)



BACKGROUND TO BATTLE

While there was no lack of recrimination over Montcalm's mishandling of the battle, or chagrin at the premature surrender of Québec, all was not yet lost for the French. At least the speed with which the defeated army had removed itself from the battle area ensured that it was granted the chance to recover and to fight again. For the British, the failure to trap and destroy the French army below the Saint Charles River was to have serious consequences. While the British had attained

their goal of taking Québec, holding on to it presented serious challenges not encountered in contemporary European warfare. Winter was coming and with the mouth of the Saint Lawrence River soon to be closed for several months by pack ice, it was considered necessary for the Royal Navy to withdraw from the river with what some considered indecent haste. There could be no question of abandoning Québec, but the withdrawal meant that the new British garrison, commanded by Brigadier-General James Murray, was going to be isolated from the outside world by several hundreds of miles with no hope of reinforcement or relief until the spring.



A private of the 58th Foot, c.1758–60, in full marching order is depicted in this modern work by Gerry Embleton. While this provides a good picture of how soldiers of the regiment looked in September 1759, they were very much broken down in appearance by the following April. Nevertheless, while Corporal Johnson makes no mention of the fact it is likely that they were in full marching order at Sainte-Foy, as Murray originally intended to dig in and encamp on the Plains. (Courtesy Parks Canada via René Chartrand)

A fine study by Baudouin of a French infantryman loading his musket. It is unlikely that those fighting in the cold weather at Sainte-Foy had their coat skirts tied back, and most were probably wearing *mitasses* or frieze leggings rather than the linen gaiters visible here. Note that he has not yet fixed his bayonet. While the bayonet was offset from the socket to allow the musket to be loaded and fired while it was fixed, this slowed the process markedly and one French account of the battle of Dettingen in 1743 attributed their defeat there to having fixed their bayonets too soon.



The French, now led by the popular Major général François de Gaston, Chevalier de Lévis, were alive to the opportunity. First, though, the army had to be rebuilt. In its ill-fated column attack against Wolfe's line the Régiment de Béarn had suffered remarkably similar losses to those of its partner, the Régiment de Guyenne. Against the latter's six officers and 23 men killed, with a further two officers and 64 men wounded, Béarn lost two captains and 31 men killed and another four officers and 72 men wounded, and afterwards it too had been forced to detach a picquet to help form the doomed garrison of the city. The only substantive difference between them was that while Colonel Fontbrunne of Guyenne was killed, his counterpart, Lieutenant colonel Jean d'Alquier de Servian of the Régiment de Béarn, was wounded but still very much alive.

The first step in restoring the regiment was to re-unite it with at least some of the men detached by way of picquets here there and everywhere. This was only partially successful. Pouchot and the officers and men captured at Niagara were duly exchanged in December, although the picquet left behind in

Québec was entirely lost, and while the grenadier company remained with the army it continued to serve as part of a consolidated grenadier battalion. (In March 1760 Pouchot himself was ordered to take command of Fort Lévis, further up the Saint Lawrence, and so missed the campaign.) Instead, Lévis turned to the militia and his morning state for 28 April 1760 shows that as against 371 regulars (including the 40-odd grenadiers), Béarn also had 261 militia attached to it. However, this time the lesson had been learned and instead of interlining the ranks of the regulars as Montcalm had done with such unfortunate results, the militia were formed in discrete companies, presumably providing direct fire support as *tirailleurs* or sharpshooters for the regulars who were to manoeuvre and fight in columns six deep.

At the first sign of spring Lévis was ready to move, all too aware that he had only a brief window of opportunity in which to retake the city before the mouth of the river reopened and the British fleet returned. It was going to be difficult, but it could be done and had to be attempted. Once again, there was no question of marching the 170-odd miles from Montréal to Québec and so on 20 April, Béarn and the rest of the French army embarked on a fleet of schooners and *bateaux*. Landing at Saint-Augustin on 26 April, they then crossed the Cap-Rouge River on temporary bridges, and moved on a British

outpost at l’Ancienne-Lorette. The outpost was promptly abandoned and the detachment manning it fell back to Sainte-Foy, sending off a warning to Québec that the French were coming. Wasting no time, Murray marched out with half his garrison in order to assess the situation and if necessary bring off his various outposts. As Murray wrote to the leading statesman William Pitt – at that time Secretary of State for the Southern Department – in a letter of 25 May 1760, he soon found the French

in possession of all the woods from Lorette to St. Foix and just entering the plain. However, they declined to attack me in the advantageous position I had taken; but, finding their numbers increasing, and endeavouring to get round me by the woods, the weather very bad, and having received intelligence while I was out of a report that two French ships were at the Traverse, I thought it proper to retreat to the town. (TNA CO 5/64)

After a cold day spent standing in reserve, Corporal John Johnson of the 58th Foot rather more feelingly remembered that it ‘rained very hard all that Afternoon, and we marched back to the Garrison, wet to the Skin’ (quoted in Doughty & Parmalee 1901 5: 120). So far, so good, but now Murray had to make a difficult decision. Back in September 1759, Montcalm had chosen to fight Wolfe in the open precisely because he had no faith in the city’s defences; neither had Murray. They were badly designed and in places the walls were in poor condition. What was more there was little or no provision for counter-battery fire – a defect all the more glaring given that the defences were completely dominated by the Buttes à Neveu. Thus, as Murray afterwards justified himself:

The enemy was greatly superior in numbers it is true; but when I considered that our little army was in the habit of beating the enemy, and had a very fine train of artillery, that shutting up ourselves at once within the walls was putting all upon the single chance of holding out for a considerable time a wretched fortification – a chance which an action in the field could scarcely alter – at the same time that it gave an additional one, perhaps a better, I resolved to give them battle, and if the event was not prosperous, to hold out to the last extremity, and then to retreat to the Isle of Orleans or Coudres with what was left of the garrison to wait for reinforcements. This night the necessary orders were given. (Quoted in Stacey 1973: 167)



This figure is taken from Windham’s *Norfolk Discipline*, but – apart from the militia-style single-breasted coat – provides a very good illustration of a British officer on campaign in North America. While a sword is still carried, he now relies on a fusil and bayonet and its accompanying belly-box. Neither gold or silver lace was much in evidence on service, and gorgets increasingly were only used to denote the officer of the day, but his commissioned status continued to be marked by his crimson silk net sash which at need could be stretched to serve as a litter should he be wounded.

The 58th Foot and the Régiment de Béarn at Sainte-Foy, 28 April 1760

MAP KEY

1 0800hrs: The British battle-line is formed facing westwards on the Buttes à Neveu, with eight battalions up and two in reserve, each with two light guns on the right flank. The 58th Foot form part of the right wing, probably deployed in a two-deep line and loose files.

2 0800hrs: Realizing that the French army is not fully up, Brigadier-General Murray moves forward to re-occupy Wolfe's old position, in the process dislodging French grenadiers from Wolfe's Hill on his left.

3 0830hrs: Murray continues to press the French back to the skirts of the Sillery Woods, but is brought to a halt by stiffening resistance as the rest of Lévis' infantry comes into line.

4 0900hrs: Initially occupied by five companies of French grenadiers, Dumont's Mill is stormed by British light companies and contested for some time until Lieutenant

colonel d'Alquier's Régiment de Béarn counter-attacks and effectively destroys the British light battalion.

5 0930hrs: With the main French battle-line still under pressure, the order is mistakenly given by La Pause to withdraw into the woods, but instead d'Alquier continues his attack, bending back the British right and forcing Murray to commit the 35th Foot to stabilize it.

6 1000hrs: The Régiment de Guyenne and the Régiment Royal-Roussillon now press on the British left flank. First, Murray commits his last reserve and then, with the 58th Foot still holding its position against Béarn, the 43rd Foot are also switched to bolster the crumbling left. By now, however, after two hours' fighting the British are running out of ammunition and defeat is only minutes away.

Battlefield environment

Although referred to as the battle of Sainte-Foy (or occasionally Sillery) in order to distinguish it from the earlier battle in September 1759, this was fought on substantially the same ground, but the environment was very different. The cornfields were gone and their fences grubbed up either to help build the strongpoints or even for firewood; instead,

the ground was saturated and the numerous dips and hollows filled knee-deep or worse with slush – half-melted snow. As at La Belle-Famille there was an additional, local hazard in the shape of *les Sauvages* – Lévis' Indian allies, who played no significant part in the fighting but moved over the field afterwards, finishing off the British wounded.

Some of the fiercest fighting in the battle of Sainte-Foy centred around Dumont's Mill, which was actually used to power a workshop and tannery. Badly damaged in the battle, it was later demolished, but this surviving windmill of a similar vintage at Pointe-aux-Trembles is very similar in size – the excavated base of Dumont's Mill having an internal diameter of 7ft – and is very typical in style to other windmills of the period still to be found up and down the Saint Lawrence Valley. (CC BY-SA 3.0 Moulin Pointe aux Trembles 2009 by Jean Gagnon)



to Québec

French units

- N. Régiment Royal-Roussillon
- O. Régiment de Guyenne
- P. Régiment de Languedoc
- Q. Régiment de Berry (two battalions)
- R. Montréal militia
- S. Régiment de la Marine (two battalions)
- T. Régiment de la Reine
- U. Régiment de Béarn
- V. Régiment de la Sarre
- W. Grenadiers



French first position

British second position

British first position

Sillery Woods

l'Anse-au-Foulon

Saint Lawrence River

British units

- A. 28th Foot
- B. 78th Highlanders
- C. 47th Foot
- D. 43rd Foot
- E. 2/60th Foot
- F. 58th Foot
- G. 15th Foot
- H. 48th Foot
- I. Dalling's Light Infantry
- J. 3/60th Foot
- K. 35th Foot
- L. Hazen's New England Rangers
- M. MacDonald's Volunteers



0 250yd
0 250m



Brigadier-General James Murray (1721–94). As lieutenant-colonel of Amherst's 15th Foot, he was the most junior of Wolfe's three brigade commanders in 1759, but as Monckton was badly wounded and Townshend eager to return home in order to reap the glory of having accepted the surrender of Québec, command of the army and responsibility for the defence of the city afterwards devolved upon Murray. He came tantalisingly close to victory at Sainte-Foy, but ultimately failed because he overtaxed his weakened army. Nevertheless, through grim determination he successfully held Québec until relief arrived and afterwards remained the province's governor until 1766.

INTO COMBAT

At daybreak on 28 April, Lévis' vanguard commenced mopping up the last of the British outposts on the Plains of Abraham and took possession of the blockhouses built by the British above l'Anse-au-Foulon. Having ordered provisions to be brought down there as soon as possible, Lévis then rode forward on to the Buttes to reconnoitre the positions where he intended to deploy his army. At that point he realized to his dismay that Murray was coming out to fight.

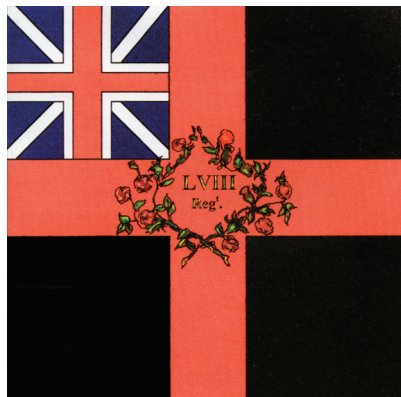
In accordance with his resolution, Murray had marched with all the force he could muster, deployed in two brigades each of four battalions, of which Lieutenant-Colonel Ralph Burton's on the right comprised (from the right) the 48th Foot, 15th Foot, 58th Foot and 2/60th Foot. On the left under Colonel Simon Fraser were the 43rd Foot, 47th Foot, 78th Highlanders and 28th Foot. In reserve, under Murray himself, were the 35th Foot and 3/60th Foot. Each of these ten battalions had two artillery pieces attached and deployed on the right flank. In addition, there were three units of light infantry; on the left were Moses Hazen's New England Rangers and a volunteer company under Captain Donald MacDonald, and on the right the regimental light companies under Major John Dalling. In total the British mustered just a little over 3,000 men. A return of the garrison four days earlier had revealed that 2,299 out of 5,565 men in the garrison's regiments were sick in hospital. Consequently, the morning state appended to Murray's official report (TNA CO 5/64) not only makes dismal reading in itself but also provides a remarkable picture of the deterioration in the strength and efficiency of regiments over just ten months.

Regiment	Present 28 April 1760
15th Foot	362
28th Foot	303
35th Foot	317
43rd Foot	194
47th Foot	294
48th Foot	350
58th Foot	309
2/60th Foot	213
3/60th Foot	261
78th Highlanders	414
Light Infantry	377
Hazen's Rangers	82

(The light infantry, it will be noted, are for once counted quite separately from their parent units. Most were on the right, but about 100 volunteers under Captain MacDonald were with Hazen's Rangers on the left.) The return is not as detailed as Townshend's one, and besides 129 artillerymen there were also 261 commissioned officers – although their rank and distribution are not recorded. By comparison with some units, the 58th Foot were still doing remarkably well. In Wolfe's battle they had lost one officer, one sergeant and eight men killed, with another four officers, three sergeants and no fewer than 80 men wounded. Most of the latter must have been only lightly wounded, for on the assumption that the figures relate only to the rank

and file it now fielded only 12 fewer men than on 13 September. Nevertheless, as Corporal Johnson grumbled, they were by no means properly fit for service:

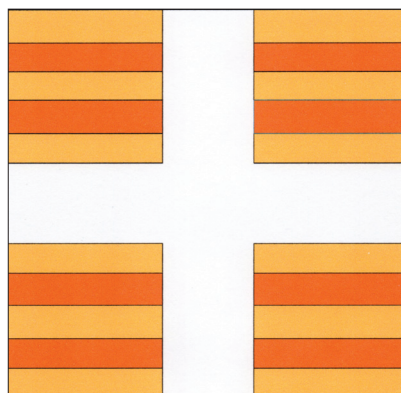
we were again assembled; – about Seven o'clock, and marched out of the town, in order for the Battel: – But for any man, who was the least acquainted with the duty we were going upon, would have shuddered at the Sight; or have really thought that General Murray, must certainly be possessed with a Spirit of enthusiasm; to have seen such a poor pitiful handful of half Starved, Scorbutic Skeletons; many of whom had laid by their Crutches on the occasion; and would not be prevailed on to stay behind, although many of them were absolutely forbidden, and would not be suffered to fall in the ranks with the Men; and who followed us out of the Gates in the Rear, and fell in when we formed the line of Battel. (Quoted in Doughty & Parmalee 1901 5: 120)



The ensigns of a British infantry regiment each took it in turn to carry one of two 6ft-square silk colours. The first, or King's, colour was a Union flag. The second, or regimental, colour as depicted here differed in placing the Union flag in the canton and ordinarily was a plain sheet displaying the regiment's facing colour and number. In the case of units which had white facings, however, a red cross was added to aid recognition, particularly in contradistinction to the white colours carried by French regiments. Anstruther's 58th Foot had black facings and therefore by convention black colours. However, then as now a black flag also signified that no prisoners were to be taken, and so in this and other cases where regiments had black facings a red cross was placed overall in similar fashion to those regiments with white facings.

The 58th Foot was not unique in this by any means but in other respects it was still a fairly remarkable regiment. Coming into existence on 28 December 1755, it was described by a reviewing officer in September of the following year as 'a good regiment, remarkably well Disciplined, and fit for service' (TNA WO 27/4). As usual its colonel, Robert Anstruther, was a distant figurehead and patron and the man who had actually trained the battalion was Lieutenant-Colonel William Howe. The fact that he was one of the British Army's foremost pioneers of light-infantry tactics no doubt accounts for the highly unusual deployment of the 58th Foot under Major Elliot during the earlier battle in September, where 'Our line of Battle would admit of us to be drawn up two deep only, from the smallness of our number, as well as the quantity of ground we had to cover to secure our flanks and also our files being at least three feet asunder' (quoted in Doughty & Parmalee 1901 5: 107). That the 58th Foot – still under Elliot's command – now did the same again, although not explicitly confirmed, is suggested both by the then-present circumstances and by Corporal Johnson's remarkably similar recollection of how the battle-line had to be stretched: 'through the smallness of our number, and the quantity of ground we had to cover, to secure the flanks of our line, the intervals between the Battalions, so excessively large' (quoted in Doughty & Parmalee 1901 5: 121).

Murray's initial intention was simply to dig in along the Buttes and so deny them to the French.



Colours of the Régiment de Béarn, as distinguished in this case by its red and dark-yellow horizontal bars displayed in all four quarterings. French battalions had two colours, of which the King's colour was generally a plain white silk sheet overlaid with a white cross. Regimental colours followed the same pattern but displayed a unique pattern of quarterings. Unlike the British practice of rotating the duty, French units confided the colours to the care of two officers holding the rank of *enseigne* and permanently assigned to battalion headquarters for that sole purpose. Traditionally, such men were not junior or aspirant officers as in other armies, but veteran NCOs of proven bravery who were otherwise barred from gaining a *lieutenant's* commission by their being illiterate.

OPPOSITE 'Le Major,' an exceptionally fine study of a French field officer, after an unknown contemporary artist. At Sainte-Foy the Régiment de Béarn was commanded by Lieutenant colonel Jean d'Alquier de Servian, described by James Johnstone as 'a brave, old officer, fierce and intrepid' (Johnstone 1871: 2.63). First commissioned in 1710, d'Alquier was already over 60 when he came to Canada in 1755 as *capitaine* of the regiment's grenadier company. Promoted to *lieutenant colonel* in November 1757, he was wounded while leading the regiment against Wolfe in 1757 and again quite badly during his decisive intervention at Sainte-Foy. (Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection)

To that end a considerable quantity of entrenching tools were carried out there by the troops. Two things now served to change his mind. First, it did not take long to realize that a combination of the cold and wet weather, and the state of the equally wet and muddy ground, covered in slush and yet only thawed to a depth of 9in, rendered this quite impractical. On the other hand, his prompt advance had caught Lévis with his army not yet fully up.

The French general hurriedly called his men forward. Five grenadier companies were immediately ordered to occupy Dumont's Mill, a fortified strongpoint on the Sainte-Foy road, abandoned by Murray the day before. His other five grenadier companies were then sent to occupy a small height – probably Wolfe's Hill – where Lévis intended to anchor his right wing in the same way. As the rest of the army arrived on the battlefield he intended to deploy by brigades from right to left. To all appearances Lévis had considerably more men than Murray, yet as the return in his official *Journal* reveals, that supposed superiority rested entirely on the incorporation of yet more militia into his depleted ranks.

Brigade	Regiment	Officers	Men	Milice	Total
Royal-Roussillon	Royal-Roussillon	24	305	279	608
	Guyenne	22	320	261	603
La Reine	La Reine	27	370	223	620
	Languedoc	14	280	285	579
Berry	two battalions	51	727	519	1,297
Montréal militia	one battalion	0	0	287	287
La Marine	two battalions	80	898	246	1,224
La Sarre	Béarn	24	371	261	656
	La Sarre	24	339	279	642
	<i>Cavallerie</i>	5	200	0	205
	<i>Sauvages</i>	8	270	0	278
					6,999

The blue-coated *Cavallerie* took part in some of the initial skirmishing as Murray drew in his outposts, but did not fight in the battle proper, while the 'Sauvages' took no part at all except to kill the wounded afterwards. It will also be noted that as in the earlier battle the ordinary French tactical doctrine of fielding four battalions in each brigade as practised in Europe had also been diluted. In Montcalm's battle this had made little difference, since an impetuous frontal assault can hardly be considered as manoeuvring. This time was going to be different and the conduct of the battle more complex.

In the meantime, having decided that this was the 'Lucky Minute' Murray moved forward from the Buttes and took up a new position on what had been Wolfe's old ground, but of course facing in the opposite direction. In so doing he hampered Lévis' deployment by forcing those brigades which had not yet come up to leave the road and move directly through the Sillery Woods. For

the same reason he commenced his attack by sending the light companies under Major Dalling to retake Dumont's Mill from the French grenadiers, and so block the road. The ensuing fight involving men of the 58th Foot's light company and the Béarn grenadier company was spiritedly described by James Johnstone, a Scottish Jacobite officer serving on Lévis' staff:

The battle began by an attack upon a fort, which lay upon their right flank and our left, which was maintained a long time with fierceness and obstinacy, by five companies of grenadiers, against as many Scotch Highlanders, both armies vying with each other to seize upon it. The grenadiers and Highlanders alternately in possession of this fort, were, notwithstanding, forced to evacuate it several times, each in their turn, before they had time to barricade it. These two antagonists, worthy the one of each other, were no sooner out by the windows, than they returned to the charge, and broke open the doors. In this murderous conflict, they were not provided with other arms, than the Highlanders with their dirks and the grenadiers with their bayonets, using them with might and main. The grenadiers were reduced to forty men per company, and there would not have remained either Highlander or grenadier of the two armies if they had not, as by tacit and reciprocal agreement, abandoned the desire of occupying the fort. (Johnstone 1871 3: 63)



The pause, if there was one, was brief, for now Lieutenant colonel d'Alquier and the rest of the Régiment de Béarn charged forward and utterly routed the light infantry. Capitaine Pouchot, while admittedly not an eyewitness, is positive that the regiments in question were his own Béarn under d'Alquier and the Régiment de Guyenne under its senior surviving captain, the Sieur de Manneville, stating that: 'These two battalions with their grenadiers dislodged them from the house' (Pouchot 1994: 254). While there is no doubting the leading part played by d'Alquier and Béarn, Lévis' journal unequivocally identifies the other regiment as La Sarre, not Guyenne; on balance, given that the casualties afterwards returned by Béarn and La Sarre are very similar and those of Guyenne very much lower, Lévis is most likely correct.

Be that as it may, Dalling was wounded and his men almost annihilated, losing 218 killed and wounded – almost two-thirds of their number. Worse, as the survivors fell back they dispersed across the front, masking the fire of the 58th Foot and the other battalions on the right. Seeing this confusion, Murray personally hurried up Otway's 35th Foot to cover his right, and this stabilized the situation for a time. Otherwise, the rest of the battle was not





Dumont's Mill

Seen through the eyes of a French grenadier belonging to the Régiment de Béarn, the fight for Dumont's Mill and tannery was acknowledged by both sides to be a particularly savage one which saw the strongpoint change hands several times. As one eyewitness picturesquely described it no sooner was one side chased out of the doors than they were clawing their way back in by the windows. Here the light company of the 58th Foot have taken the mill and are storming towards the house. Although both sides are armed with Modèle 1728 and Land Pattern muskets respectively, there is little time to reload and most men are fighting with bayonets, swords and knives. Nevertheless, in the confusion Capitaine Jacques de Barjetton de Monredon, the 58-year-old commander of the Béarn grenadiers, has been shot through both legs. Listed afterwards as dangerously wounded, he will die three months later and be buried at the nearby General Hospital. Dismayed, his men are starting to fall back. Their opponents are largely dressed and equipped in accordance with the standing orders

for light infantry in North America, with shortened coats, powder horns and bullet bags. Unlike some they have retained their bayonets, and some also carry large butcher knives or 'cutlasses' – forerunners of 19th-century bowie knives. While light infantry were ordinarily ordered to wear caps converted from cut-down hats, two French accounts of the fight identify those fighting at the Mill as a Highland regiment. One company will indeed have belonged to the 78th Highlanders, but the fact that all were identified as Highlanders by the French indicates that the Québec light companies had very practically elected to wear Highland blue bonnets instead of caps. Only their commander retains his cocked hat in order that they can recognize him easily. Having finally taken the strongpoint, but become totally disordered in the process, the 58th and other light infantry will shortly be counter-attacked and utterly routed by the fusilier companies of Béarn, led by Lieutenant colonel d'Alquier.

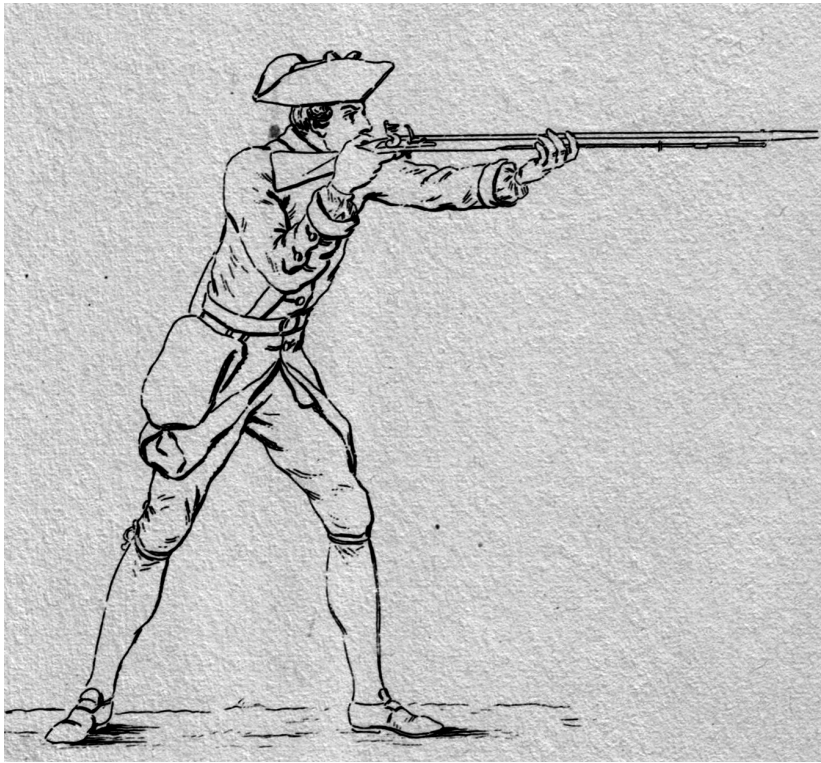
going well for the French, as Corporal Johnson of the 58th Foot recorded:

We took into the Field a vast number of entrenching tools, as also Twenty brass Field pieces ... which Artillery were planted two on the Right flank of each Battalion; and so long as we had Ammunition to Support them we maintained our ground, and obliged their Front Line to Press so hard upon their Rear, as to force them into the Skirts of the Wood, which was close behind them. (Quoted in Dougherty & Parmalee 1901 5: 121)

This was ruefully confirmed by the former Jacobite turned officer of the *compagnies franches de la marine*, James Johnstone:

Our left, which was in a hollow, and distant from the English about thirty paces, was swept by their artillery, which they fired with grape shot. M. Lévis perceiving their bad position, and wishing to remedy it, by making our army fall back to occupy an eminence parallel to that where the English were, sent M. Pause, an officer of the regiment of *Guyenne*, who acted as his aide-de-camp, to inform all the commanders of corps to make this movement in rear with their regiments; but whether it was that Pause has misconceived the intentions of M. Lévis, or whether it was that he had badly delivered his orders, he ran along our line, ordering, on the part of M. Lévis, every regiment to face about to retreat, without further explaining himself. It is hardly possible that the best troops that ever were in the world could be able to retreat at twenty paces from the enemy, without being thrown into disorder. Our army appeared to the English general to be in rout, and he quitted his position on the rising ground, to pounce upon us completely, and to pursue us. (Johnstone 1871 3: 63–64)

Knox, however, saw it in less dramatic terms, declaring that 'In the course of the action we were insensibly drawn from our advantageous situation into low



A British infantryman firing, as depicted in William Windham's 1759 *A Plan of Discipline composed for the use of the Militia of the County of Norfolk*. The mud and slush mentioned by Knox proved their undoing, for although the action was being fought at what might be considered a murderously close range, the famed British musketry was proving unequal to it. Returning to Corporal Johnson and the 58th Foot, this is illustrated only too clearly. If, as seems likely, Howe had them deployed in two ranks rather than three, then each company or platoon will have had a frontage of 17 men, and in either event the files were probably rather looser than normal. Even if proper fire control was maintained and they continued firing alternately without descending into a general *feu de ballebaude*, the actual volume of musket fire in relation to the frontage occupied was ineffective, which is why every participant on both sides, including Johnson, stressed the vital importance of the British artillery: 'First, all the while we maintained the fire of our Artillery, they dare not face us in the open plain; but pressed themselves into the Skirts of the wood in their Rear; from which it appears plainly that if our Ammunition waggons could have gotten up to us, and supplied us with Ammunition, they would not have drove us with that intolerable precipitation into the town ... but the Ammunition waggons were ... bogged in deep pits of Snow, and therefore intirely unable to come up to us' (quoted in Doughty & Parmalee 1901 5: 121).

swampy ground, where our troops fought almost knee-deep in dissolving wreaths of snow and water, where it was utterly impracticable to draw off our artillery' (Knox 1914: 2.394). It was doubly unfortunate that at this critical moment, just as the British ammunition supply faltered, d'Alquier chose to ignore Lévis' orders to withdraw and instead counter-attacked at the head of the Régiment de Béarn:

M. Dalquier, commandant of the *Béarn* regiment, who was at the left of our army, beside the troops of the colony – a brave, old officer, fierce and intrepid – as soon as Pause gave him the order to retreat, at the instant he turned to his soldiers and said to them, 'At twenty paces from the enemy, my boys, there is no time to retreat; bayonets to the mouth of your muskets; strike upon the enemy: that is best.' He charged the enemy with impetuosity, seized their artillery immediately, and received, at the same time, a volley of musketry across the body, already quite covered with scars, but which did not hinder him from continuing to give his orders. M. Poularies, who was at the right of our army, with his Roussillon Royal Regiment and Canadians, the whole interval between the two wings of our army being already thrown back in disorder, seeing M. Dalquier advancing against the enemy, in place of retreating like the other regiments, he made, on the instant the wheel of a quarter circle, to the left, to fall upon the left flank of the English, which he outflanked with his regiment and the Canadians. (Johnstone 1871 3: 63–64)

In fact, the battle was spiralling out of control. Lévis intended to counter-attack with both the Royal-Roussillon and La Reine brigades on his right wing, but once again his orders were misinterpreted or went astray. Most of

The socket bayonet – a British one is illustrated here – was an essential adjunct to the firelock musket. Both British and French tactical doctrine recognized its effectiveness when used en masse, and at a personal level it also came into its own when there was no time to reload. At Sainte-Foy in 1760 the fight for Dumont's Mill was almost entirely conducted at bayonet point. Johnstone confirmed that far from being an orderly withdrawal, the British retreat was very largely a horrible rout: 'The enemy ... was struck with a frightful panic, broke loose; and the English soldiers all fled with such precipitation, that their officers were not able to restrain a single man. Our army pursued them very hotly ...' (Johnstone 1871 3: 63–64). Whether at Culloden or Québec, Johnstone had a flair for the dramatic, but Capitaine Pouchot, no doubt relying on the testimony of his fellow officers in the Régiment de Béarn, painted a more sober picture of how 'We pursued them to beneath Quebec, but not very vigorously ... It is certain that, if they had been able to run, very few English would have returned to Quebec & we would have remained masters of the place, which was only occupied by sick and crippled men' (Pouchot 1994: 255).



the La Reine brigade drifted off towards the crumbling centre, but it is a measure of the confusion that the Canadians referred to by Johnstone were in fact the militia companies attached to the La Reine brigade, who instead of following their parent unit went in with the Royal-Roussillon.

With his left flank being turned by this attack, Murray responded by throwing in his last reserve, the 3/60th Foot, and pulling Lieutenant Knox and the 43rd Foot out of the centre to bolster his collapsing left. It was too late. The 58th Foot and the other battalions in the centre were still holding – just – but their artillery support was gone and that in turn drew the French forward; casualties mounted quickly. Recognizing that the army had only a few more minutes of fight left in it, Murray sensibly gave the order to withdraw. Even then, as Corporal Johnson candidly recalled in a dramatically honest account of the collapse of the 58th Foot, he had almost left it too late:

as soon as they found that our Artillery had intirely ceased, and that our Musquetry was so very light, that they Advanced boldly upon us, which in a little time forced us to give way; and which we gradually did for some time, keeping a good front towards them: but through the smallness of our number, and the quantity of ground we had to cover, to secure the flanks of our line, the intervals between the Battalions, so excessively large, and the Cannon ceased firing, which used to cover those intervals, they advanced and broke in hastily upon us, like a hasty torrent from a lofty precipice and got into our front through those intervals, and which obliged us to retire in confusion each one striving to shift for himself, and yet under the fire of the Garrison in the best manner he was able; leaving behind us all our Artillery, and about a thousand as brave men as ever faced an Enemy in the Field. (Quoted in Doughty & Parmalee 1901 5: 121)

Afterwards, Murray admitted to 13 officers killed or died of wounds and 78 wounded but still living and 279 men killed and 759 wounded, besides 13 officers and 40 men taken prisoner. Unfortunately, he neglected to provide a detailed breakdown, but it seems likely that the 58th Foot may once again have escaped comparatively lightly since only one of their officers, Ensign Archibald Conway, was recorded as killed (Sergeant William St Clair was promoted from the ranks next day to replace him), while the regimental succession book identifies just 12 men killed or died of wounds between Christmas Eve of 1759 and early in 1763. Of those, William James had died in an ambush in February 1760 and it is possible that one or two others may have been killed later at Havana, so there were probably no more than ten men killed or fatally wounded – including Henry Fisher, who died on 13 May 1760 – and most were probably serving with the light company.

It was unquestionably a French victory, but a dearly bought one. There were 28 officers killed and 68 wounded, together with 165 men killed and 572 wounded. Of that total, the share which fell to Béarn was three officers killed and ten wounded, together with 22 men killed and 85 wounded.

Analysis

COMMAND AND CONTROL

The greatest problem faced by both sides in Canada was that of communication and the consequent difficulties (and occasional opportunities) this created in exercising effective command and control. At a strategic level, distance and geography meant that delayed communications were inevitable and some commanders exploited this ruthlessly; Johnson, for example, took command at Niagara simply because the senior officer, Haldimand, was temporarily unreachable. This was both inevitable and expected. Surprisingly, the real difficulties were encountered at a more local level. At La Belle-Famille, Lignery was unable to communicate effectively with Pouchot, much less coordinate efforts between the garrison and the relief force despite their being in sight of each other. More famously, Montcalm launched his last battle prematurely because Bougainville failed to advise him that he was fast approaching and would shortly be in a position to intervene decisively.

On the battlefield itself it was even worse. While there was no doubting the British tactical victory on the Plains, the opportunity to trap and utterly destroy the French army was lost simply because both the general and his second-in-command went down at about the same time and it took too long to find the officer next in seniority. This was because both the officer in question and those seeking him were on foot. Similarly, at Sainte-Foy in the following April, Lévis essentially botched his battle through poor communications. He himself appears to have been mounted but not so his staff, for Capitaine La Pause at least was described as ‘running’ from regiment to regiment. There is no doubt that Lévis was discomfited by Murray’s spoiling attack and the action around Dumont’s Mill. This disrupted Lévis’ deployment, and his attempts to regain control were first frustrated by the difficulty of communicating with units forced to move through the Sillery Woods and then by the faulty transmission of orders.



A major limitation in command and control was the lack of horses available to British commanders. At La Belle-Famille, Massey had to stand on a log to see what was happening and was shot and wounded for his pains. On the Plains of Abraham, unable to see over the heads of his men, Wolfe needed to move into the front line and was promptly shot twice in quick succession at close range. Afterwards, he was helped back out of the firing line and this lithographed copy of Edward Penny's surprisingly accurate painting records both Wolfe's last moments and the plainness of his fighting uniform. (Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection)

The net result of these failures on both sides was that far more responsibility than usual devolved upon individual battalion commanders. Notwithstanding Johnson's later efforts to take the credit, there is no doubt that the fight at La Belle-Famille was managed by Lieutenant-Colonel Massey and that his junior officers, including De Lancey of the light infantry and Marsh of the grenadiers, were acting very much on their own initiative. The same was also true of the French. At Sainte-Foy, responsibility for the French victory rested in large part on battalion commanders such as Lieutenant colonel d'Alquier. This devolution of command was all the more marked in that all too often the battalion commanders in question were not lieutenant-colonels or even majors, but captains. The 43rd Foot was commanded on the Plains of Abraham by Major Elliot, but the largest battalion on the field, Fraser's 78th Highlanders, was commanded by a captain, James Campbell. This was far from an isolated example on both sides. D'Alquier had still been a captain of grenadiers when he commanded the Régiment de Béarn at Ticonderoga and the Régiment de Guyenne was commanded at Sainte-Foy by its senior captain.

BRITISH TACTICAL DEVELOPMENT

Notwithstanding the differing outcomes, the tactical doctrines employed by the respective armies in all three engagements under discussion were broadly similar; and while shaped to a degree by the particular environment in which they were fought, both reflected and ultimately to a degree foreshadowed European practice. Often considered as unimaginative and inflexible, after the early debacles on the Monongahela River and at Ticonderoga, British performance was both innovative and effective. At the most basic level the war saw some significant alterations in infantry tactics.

Prior to the mid-1750s, tactical precepts revolved around the platoon-firing system, which had been devised as a means of delivering a steady and continuous series of volleys rippling up and down a battle-line. However, it was at the same time rather less effective than its supporters claimed, and largely through the energy of James Wolfe the far more effective Alternate system was introduced, together with a new form of bayonet fighting which broke away from the earlier and thoroughly old-fashioned style originally founded upon the drill used for massed bodies of pikemen. Ostensibly, both innovations were based upon contemporary Prussian practice, and lauded as such by Wolfe, but – ironically – the tactical thinking behind both appears to have been French. Be that as it may, the Alternate system, allied to Wolfe's own innovation of turning each company into a platoon, also paved the way

for massed volleys, as seen on the Plains of Abraham, and together with the new style of handling the bayonet developed into the 'Volley and Bayonet' tactics which were to be so crucial to British success in the Napoleonic Wars.

Of itself this was important, but in the end a yet more significant development was initiated by Sir William Howe, the commanding officer of the 58th Foot. He had a considerable interest in the development of light-infantry tactics and this was reflected in the unusual deployment of the 58th Foot on the Plains of Abraham, in just two ranks rather than the usual three and with files 'three feet asunder.' There is no reason to believe that the same was not done again at Sainte-Foy; significantly, Howe would return to North America nearly two decades later not leading a battalion but as the British commander-in-chief, and as such ensuring that such deployments, together with the volley and bayonet tactics pioneered in Canada, should be the norm. Afterwards, as European-orientated officers argued in favour of the solidity of 'Prussian' infantry tactics, Howe's methods would be derided as 'loose files and American scramble', but in the end they triumphed and became the foundation for British infantry tactics throughout the 19th century and beyond.



Like Jean-Antoine Watteau's very similar studies of French infantrymen on the march on page 6, these near-contemporary sketches of British infantrymen by an unknown artist from Penicuik present a very different and far more realistic picture of soldiers on active service than that normally associated with the 18th-century 'Lace Wars', but their shabby appearance and scruffily slouched hats are confirmed in contemporary accounts. Swords, however, were only carried in North America by grenadiers, those of the 60th Foot being long-bladed Highland broadswords borrowed from the Black Watch.

FRENCH TACTICAL DEVELOPMENT

As already noted, in Europe French infantry doctrine centred upon a standardized brigade structure comprising four battalions and identified by the name of the senior regiment. In Canada this was appropriately scaled down to just two battalions in each brigade. Nevertheless, fighting tactics, at least as far as regular troops were concerned, remained consistent and all three featured engagements saw paired battalions attacking in column formation as well as fighting in line. Ordinarily, as required by the drill-book, such column attacks were mounted in a six-deep formation and the fact a 12-deep formation was observed – with unhappy results – at La Belle-Famille was an accident arising from their being ambushed while moving along a road, rather than a deliberate decision. While popularly associated with the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars of nearly half a century later, such column attacks had been the primary element of the French Army's tactical repertoire since the time of Louis XIV. Experience in Canada allied the assault columns to clouds of *tirailleurs* or sharpshooters.

In Europe as well as in Canada at this time there was a perceived requirement for so-called 'light' troops capable of undertaking detached operations. The designation, then as now, reflected the fact that such units were cut adrift from the conventional logistic tail. Ironically, this meant that



individually such light infantry were (and often still are) more heavily burdened than ordinary infantry, since they need to carry everything on their backs rather than rely on wagons and pack-horses. Conversely, the fact of their operating in relatively small detachments and parties meant that individual battle-skills were extremely important and skirmishing tactics more important than conventional ones. However, that only reflected their detached role, and if returned to the embrace of their parent battalion they tended to be formed back in the ranks with the rest of their comrades rather than employed as an organic skirmishing resource.

Warfare in Canada was different, in that a shortage of regular troops compelled the levying and eventually the conscription of very substantial numbers of militia and employing them not in a supporting role but as combat troops. This, as we have seen, produced mixed results. In the first place, many and perhaps most were ordinary farmers and labourers, artisans and tradesmen, little different from their European counterparts. Just as in Europe, the Marquis de Montcalm saw them primarily as a source of reinforcement drafts for his regulars. After the defeat on the Plains, other French officers were united in claiming their lack of training and discipline was directly responsible for the poor performance of some units, but the extent to which this was actually true is debatable, as is Capitaine Pouchot's belief that they were also poorly armed. At any rate, drawing on this unhappy experience, Lévis appears to have taken a different and much more successful approach. The most effective of the Canadian militia had been those employed as skirmishers, and with a renewed emphasis on moving and fighting in column rather than line, the militia contingents assigned to each regiment appear to have been attached to them rather than integrated within their ranks. The intention thereby was that the irregulars would act as *tirailleurs* or sharpshooters, screening and providing fire for the columns. This foreshadowed, obviously, the use of such tactics on a far greater scale during the Revolutionary Wars. It would be difficult, however, to draw a direct causal link between the two except in so far as both proceeded from well-established French doctrine.



The British landing on St John's is depicted in this contemporary print. (Public Domain)

Aftermath

A far bloodier battle than Wolfe's one on the same ground in September 1759, Sainte-Foy was also, as it turned out, a futile one. Lévis duly occupied the Buttes à Neveu and opened his batteries on 11 May. At first, matters looked promising, but the next day Murray was dismayed to find the weak Glacière Bastion already crumbling. Unfortunately for Lévis, he had few heavy guns and was desperately short of powder. That brief effort exhausted the French artillery and thereafter each gun was limited to firing no more than 20 rounds each day. That was no way to create a breach. Murray held on doggedly and was rewarded by the return of the Royal Navy on the evening of 15 May. That night Lévis abandoned the siege of Québec and fell back on Montréal, where on 7 September 1760 all of Canada was surrendered.

Two years after the fighting was ended on the North American mainland by the surrender of the French army at Montréal, there was one last isolated action between British and French regulars. The French Navy at this period was heavily reliant on experienced seamen from the Grand Banks fisheries, and in order to retain a foothold in the trade an expedition, led by the Comte d'Haussonville and sailing directly from France, captured St John's, Newfoundland on 27 June 1762. The French were not left in undisputed possession for long and on 15 September a hastily assembled British force from Canada landed and stormed a fort which had been built on Signal Hill. This fort dominated the settlement and harbour below, forcing d'Haussonville to surrender three days later. Even then there was to be no rest for the British regulars, for in the following year the transfer of Canada to British sovereignty by the terms of the Treaty of Paris (10 February 1763) saw a new war against a number of Indian tribes known as Pontiac's Rebellion, which saw King George's soldiers march and fight once more in the Illinois and Ohio countries, and around the Great Lakes.

Once the siege of Québec was lifted, Lévis had no alternative but to retreat to Montréal and there, when Amherst arrived, he surrendered on 7 September 1760. Amherst refused the defeated army the honours of war and so Lévis' regiments burned their colours before marching out and quite literally laying down their arms in the prescribed manner as meticulously depicted here by Baudouin. Note how, as part of the drill movement, the soldier grasps the rear strap of his *giberne* or cartridge box in order to prevent it swinging down as he bends over.



UNIT ORGANIZATIONS

British

British infantry regiments generally comprised only a single battalion, each of which mustered ten companies, one of them designated as grenadiers. In North America from 17 April 1759, one company was redesignated as light infantry and its personnel reshuffled as suitable men were exchanged into it from the other companies.

Each company was normally commanded by three officers – a captain, lieutenant and ensign or second lieutenant, although in wartime another lieutenant was temporarily added to the establishment to allow for contingencies – and comprised three sergeants, three corporals, two drummers and a notional 70 men. Three of the ten captains ranked as field officers, of whom the colonel was an absent patron, leaving a lieutenant-colonel and major in actual command – but it was common enough to find one or the other absent, and even occasionally to find the battalion commanded by the senior captain.

The official establishment for a battalion was 700 rank and file – a figure which was reduced dramatically on active service by details, sickness and casualties, especially as it was well-nigh impossible to obtain reinforcement drafts. Of the ten battalions (exclusive of the three consolidated companies of 'Louisbourg Grenadiers') which fought at Québec on 13 September 1759, for example, only two numbered just over 600 rank and file while the others ranged upwards from just 266 men.

A further drain on fighting strength was the practice of detaching the light-infantry companies to form provisional units rather than serving as an integral skirmishing element. Conversely, with the exception of the 'Louisbourg Grenadiers' at the outset of the Québec campaign, there were no consolidated grenadier battalions. The abortive landing at Montmorency early in the campaign was headed by the grenadiers, but they returned to their parent units afterwards.

Administration of the battalion was the responsibility of the major and the adjutant. The latter was a company officer – usually a lieutenant – with the senior sergeant or sergeant major and at least one clerk. The paymaster's job was performed part-time by a captain. Basic medical services were provided by a surgeon and his mate, and everything else by the quartermaster, quartermaster-sergeant and their assistants, all drawn from their companies. Both surgeon and quartermaster also drew heavily upon the regimental women. Officially six women per company were carried on the ration strength, but there were usually considerably more employed as nurses, laundresses, cooks and bottle-washers.

French

French battalions of the *troupes de terre* comprised a small staff consisting of a lieutenant colonel, two majors and two *enseignes* (carrying the colours), 12 fusilier companies and one grenadier company. Fusilier companies were generally 40 strong with two commissioned officers (a *capitaine*, and a *lieutenant* as his second in command), two *sergents*, three *caporaux*, three *lance-passadoes* and a drummer.

Grenadier companies were 45 strong with a *capitaine* and two *lieutenants*, and so far as possible were replenished by skimming men from the fusilier companies. This affected the battalion as a whole, since French doctrine was to detach the grenadiers in order to form them into composite battalions. This was not so different from the British practice of doing the same with light companies, but it was supplemented by the creation of picquets comprised of a *capitaine*, a *lieutenant*, two *sergents*, a drummer and 47 men. (The latter figure presumably included the *caporaux* and lance corporals and therefore equated in size to a full company.) The picquet was an ad hoc formation made up of officers and men volunteered from the ordinary fusilier companies and normally intended as a temporary expedient for a particular purpose. Unfortunately, the practice got a little out of hand in Canada, with numerous picquets being formed, thus considerably diminishing the core battalion.

Ordinarily, the colonial regulars were made up of *compagnies franches de la marine* or independent companies. Their organization was standardized in 1757, with four officers (one *capitaine*, one *lieutenant* and two ranking as *enseigne*) two sergeants, two *cadets* or aspirant officers, three *caporaux*, a drummer and 65 rank and file. In practice, they normally mustered rather fewer.

It was common practice to brigade a number of companies together in a temporary, ad hoc fashion for specific operations, but in July 1757 an eight-company-strong battalion was formed to serve alongside the *troupes de terre* from France, followed by a second battalion in early 1760. The two battalions were frequently referred to as the Régiment de la Marine, although there was no connection with the French Army regiment of that name. Having thus formed themselves into a regiment, they proceeded to form a grenadier company in each battalion; and these were seconded to the consolidated grenadier battalions formed by the *troupes de terre*.

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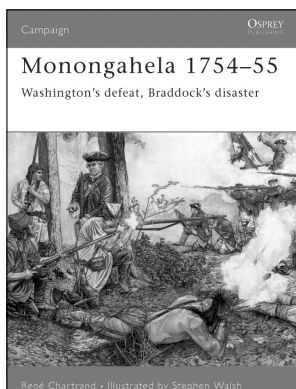
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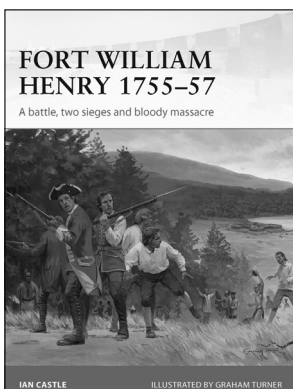
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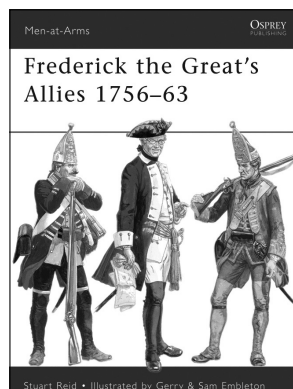
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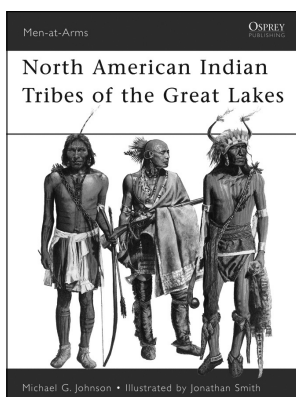
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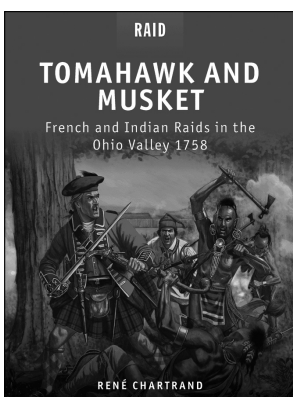
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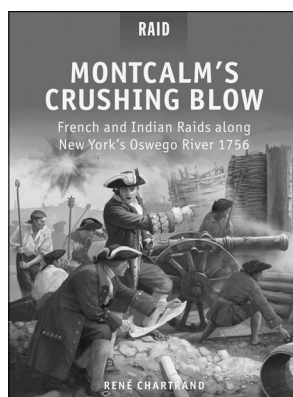
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